

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

No. 166.]

SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 1863.

[PRICE 2d.]

NO NAME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS: PRESERVED IN CAPTAIN WRAGGE'S DESPATCH BOX.

IX.

[*Chronicle for June.*]

9th.—I RETURNED yesterday with my information. Here it is, privately noted down for convenience of future reference:

Mr. Noel Vanstone left Brighton yesterday; and removed, for the purpose of transacting business in London, to one of his late father's empty houses in Vauxhall Walk, Lambeth. This singularly mean selection of a place of residence, on the part of a gentleman of fortune, looks as if Mr. N. V. and his money were not easily parted.

Mr. Noel Vanstone has stepped into his father's shoes under the following circumstances. Mr. Michael Vanstone appears to have died, curiously enough, as Mr. Andrew Vanstone died—intestate. With this difference, however, in the two cases, that the younger brother left an informal will, and the elder brother left no will at all. The hardest men have their weaknesses; and Mr. Michael Vanstone's weakness seems to have been an insurmountable horror of contemplating the event of his own death. His son, his housekeeper, and his lawyer, had all three tried, over and over again, to get him to make a will; and had never shaken his obstinate resolution to put off performing the only business-duty he was ever known to neglect. Two doctors attended him, in his last illness; warned him that he was too old a man to hope to get over it; and warned him in vain. He announced his own positive determination not to die. His last words in this world (as I succeeded in discovering from the nurse, who assisted Mrs. Lecount) were, "I'm getting better every minute; send for the fly directly and take me out for a drive." The same night, Death proved to be the more obstinate of the two; and left his son (and only child) to take the property in due course of law. Nobody doubts that the result would have been the same if a will had been made. The father and son had every confidence in each other; and were known to have always lived together on the most friendly terms.

Mrs. Lecount remains with Mr. Noel Van-

stone, in the same housekeeping capacity which she filled with his father; and has accompanied him to the new residence in Vauxhall Walk. She is acknowledged on all hands to have been a sufferer by the turn events have taken. If Mr. Michael Vanstone had made his will, there is no doubt she would have received a handsome legacy. She is now left dependent on Mr. Noel Vanstone's sense of gratitude; and she is not at all likely, I should imagine, to let that sense fall asleep for want of a little timely jogging. Whether my fair relative's future intentions in this quarter, point towards Mischief or Money, is more than I can yet say. In either case, I venture a prediction that she will find an awkward obstacle in Mrs. Lecount.

So much for my information to the present date. The manner in which it was received by Miss Vanstone showed the most ungrateful distrust of me. She confided nothing to my private ear, but the expression of her best thanks. A sharp girl—a devilish sharp girl. But there is such a thing as bowling a man out once too often; especially when the name of that man happens to be Wragge.

Not a word more about the Entertainment: not a word more about moving from our present quarters. Very good. My right hand lays my left hand a wager. Ten to one, on her opening communications with the son, as she opened them with the father. Ten to one, on her writing to Noel Vanstone before the month is out.

23rd.—She has written by to-day's post. A long letter apparently—for she put two stamps on the envelope. (Private memorandum, addressed to myself. Wait for the answer.)

22nd, 23rd, 24th.—Private memorandum continued. Wait for the answer.

25th.—The answer has come. As an ex-military man, I have naturally employed stratagem to get at it. The success which rewards all genuine perseverance, has rewarded me—and I have got at it accordingly.

The letter is written, not by Mr. Noel Vanstone, but by Mrs. Lecount. She takes the highest moral ground, in a tone of spiteful politeness. Mr. Noel Vanstone's delicate health and recent bereavement, prevent him from writing himself. Any more letters from Miss Vanstone will be returned unopened. Any personal application, will produce an immediate appeal to the

protection of the law. Mr. Noel Vanstone, having been expressly cautioned against Miss Magdalen Vanstone, by his late lamented father, has not yet forgotten his father's advice. Considers it a reflection cast on the honoured memory of the best of men to suppose that his course of action towards the Miss Vanstones can be other than the course of action which his father pursued. This is what he has himself instructed Mrs. Lecount to say. She has endeavoured to express herself in the most conciliatory language she could select; she has tried to avoid giving unnecessary pain, by addressing Miss Vanstone (as a matter of courtesy) by the family name; and she trusts these concessions, which speak for themselves, will not be thrown away.—[Such is the substance of the letter,—and so it ends.]

I draw two conclusions from this little document. First—that it will lead to serious mischief. Secondly—that Mrs. Lecount, with all her politeness, is a dangerous woman to deal with. I wish I saw my way safe before me. I don't see it yet.

29th.—Miss Vanstone has abandoned my protection; and the whole lucrative future of the dramatic entertainment has abandoned me with her. I am swindled—I, the last man under Heaven who could possibly have expected to write in those disgraceful terms of himself—I AM SWINDLED!

Let me chronicle the events. They exhibit me, for the time being, in a sadly helpless point of view. But the nature of the man prevails: I must have the events down in black and white.

The announcement of her approaching departure was intimated to me yesterday. After another civil speech about the information I had procured at Brighton, she hinted that there was a necessity for pushing our inquiries a little further. I immediately offered to undertake them, as before. "No," she said; "they are not in your way this time. They are inquiries relating to a woman; and I mean to make them myself!" Feeling privately convinced that this new resolution pointed straight at Mrs. Lecount, I tried a few innocent questions on the subject. She quietly declined to answer them. I asked next, when she proposed to leave. She would leave on the twenty-eighth. For what destination? London. For long? Probably not. By herself? No. With me? No. With whom then? With Mrs. Wragge, if I had no objection. Good Heavens! for what possible purpose? For the purpose of getting a respectable lodging, which she could hardly expect to accomplish unless she was accompanied by an elderly female friend. And was I, in the capacity of elderly male friend, to be left out of the business altogether? Impossible to say at present. Was I not even to forward any letters which might come for her at our present address? No: she would make the arrangement herself at the post-office; and she would ask me, at the same time, for an address, at which I could receive a letter from her, in case of necessity for

future communication. Further inquiries, after this last answer, could lead to nothing but waste of time. I saved time by putting no more questions.

It was clear to me, that our present position towards each other was what our position had been, previously to the event of Michael Vanstone's death. I returned, as before, to my choice of alternatives. Which way did my private interests point? Towards trusting the chance of her wanting me again? Towards threatening her with the interference of her relatives and friends? Or towards making the information which I possessed a marketable commodity between the wealthy branch of the family and myself? The last of the three was the alternative I had chosen in the case of the father. I chose it once more in the case of the son.

The train started for London nearly four hours since, and took her away in it, accompanied by Mrs. Wragge. My wife is far too great a fool, poor soul, to be actively valuable in the present emergency; but she will be passively useful in keeping up Miss Vanstone's connexion with me—and, in consideration of that circumstance, I consent to brush my own trousers, shave my own chin, and submit to the other inconveniences of waiting on myself for a limited period. Any faint glimmerings of sense which Mrs. Wragge may have formerly possessed, appear to have now finally taken their leave of her. On receiving permission to go to London, she favoured us immediately with two inquiries. Might she do some shopping? and might she leave the cookery-book behind her? Miss Vanstone said, Yes, to one question; and I said, Yes, to the other—and from that moment, Mrs. Wragge has existed in a state of perpetual laughter. I am still hoarse with vainly-repeated applications of vocal stimulant; and I left her in the railway carriage, to my inexpressible disgust, with both shoes down at heel. Under ordinary circumstances, these absurd particulars would not have dwelt on my memory. But, as matters actually stand, my unfortunate wife's imbecility may, in her present position, lead to consequences which we none of us foresee. She is nothing more or less than a grown-up child; and I can plainly detect that Miss Vanstone trusts her, as she would not have trusted a sharper woman, on that very account. I know children, little and big, rather better than my fair relative does, and I say—beware of all forms of human innocence, when it happens to be your interest to keep a secret to yourself.

Let me return to business. Here I am, at two o'clock on a fine summer's afternoon, left entirely alone, to consider the safest means of approaching Mr. Noel Vanstone, on my own account. My private suspicions of his miserly character produce no discouraging effect on me. I have extracted cheering pecuniary results in my time from people quite as fond of their money as he can be. The real difficulty to contend with is the obstacle of Mrs. Lecount. If I am not mis-

taken, this lady merits a little serious consideration on my part. I will close my chronicle for to-day, and give Mrs. Lecount her due.

Three o'clock.—I open these pages again, to record a discovery which has taken me entirely by surprise.

After completing the last entry, a circumstance revived in my memory, which I had noticed on escorting the ladies this morning to the railway. I then remarked that Miss Vanstone had only taken one of her three boxes with her—and it now occurred to me that a private investigation of the luggage she had left behind, might possibly be attended with beneficial results. Having, at certain periods of my life, been in the habit of cultivating friendly terms with strange locks, I found no difficulty in establishing myself on a familiar footing with Miss Vanstone's boxes. One of the two presented nothing to interest me. The other—devoted to the preservation of the costumes, articles of toilette, and other properties used in the dramatic Entertainment—proved to be better worth examining: for it led me straight to the discovery of one of its owner's secrets.

I found all the dresses in the box complete—with one remarkable exception. That exception was the dress of the old North-country lady; the character which I have already mentioned as the best of all my pupil's disguises, and as modelled in voice and manner on her old governess, Miss Garth. The wig; the eyebrows; the bonnet and veil; the cloak, padded inside to disfigure her back and shoulders; the paints and cosmetics used to age her face and alter her complexion—were all gone. Nothing but the gown remained; a gaudily flowered silk, useful enough for dramatic purposes, but too extravagant in colour and pattern to bear inspection by daylight. The other parts of the dress are sufficiently quiet to pass muster; the bonnet and veil are only old fashioned, and the cloak is of a sober grey colour. But one plain inference can be drawn from such a discovery as this. As certainly as I sit here, she is going to open the campaign against Noel Vanstone and Mrs. Lecount, in a character which neither of those two persons can have any possible reason for suspecting at the outset—the character of Miss Garth.

What course am I to take under these circumstances? Having got her secret, what am I to do with it? These are awkward considerations; I am rather puzzled how to deal with them.

It is something more than the mere fact of her choosing to disguise herself to forward her own private ends, that causes my present perplexity. Hundreds of girls take fancies for disguising themselves; and hundreds of instances of it are related, year after year, in the public journals. But my ex-pupil is not to be confounded, for one moment, with the average adventuress of the newspapers. She is capable of going a long way beyond the limit of dressing herself like a man, and imitating a man's voice and manner. She has a natural gift for assuming

characters, which I have never seen equalled by a woman; and she has performed in public until she has felt her own power, and trained her talent for disguising herself to the highest pitch. A girl who takes the sharpest people unawares by using such a capacity as this to help her own objects in private life; and who sharpens that capacity by a determination to fight her way to her own purpose which has beaten down everything before it, up to this time—is a girl who tries an experiment in deception, new enough and dangerous enough to lead, one way or the other, to very serious results. This is my conviction, founded on a large experience in the art of imposing on my fellow-creatures. I say of my fair relative's enterprise what I never said or thought of it till I introduced myself to the inside of her box. The chances for and against her winning the fight for her lost fortune are now so evenly balanced, that I cannot for the life of me see on which side the scale inclines. All I can discern is, that it will, to a dead certainty, turn one way or the other, on the day when she passes Noel Vanstone's doors in disguise.

[Which way do my interests point now? Upon my honour, I don't know.]

Five o'clock.—I have effected a masterly compromise; I have decided on turning myself into a Jack-on-both-sides.

By to-day's post I have despatched to London an anonymous letter for Mr. Noel Vanstone. It will be forwarded to its destination by the same means which I successfully adopted to mystify Mr. Pencil; and it will reach Vauxhall Walk, Lambeth, by the afternoon of to-morrow, at the latest.

The letter is short, and to the purpose. It warns Mr. Noel Vanstone, in the most alarming language, that he is destined to become the victim of a conspiracy; and that the prime mover of it is a young lady who has already held written communication with his father and himself. It offers him the information necessary to secure his own safety, on condition that he makes it worth the writer's while to run the serious personal risk which such a disclosure will entail on him. And it ends by stipulating that the answer shall be advertised in the Times; shall be addressed to "An Unknown Friend;" and shall state plainly what remuneration Mr. Noel Vanstone offers for the priceless service which it is proposed to render him.

Unless some unexpected complication occurs, this letter places me exactly in the position which it is my present interest to occupy. If the advertisement appears, and if the remuneration offered is large enough to justify me in going over to the camp of the enemy, over I go. If no advertisement appears, or if Mr. Noel Vanstone rates my invaluable assistance at too low a figure, here I remain, biding my time till my fair relative wants me—or till I make her want me, which comes to the same thing. If the anonymous letter falls by any accident into her hands, she will find disparaging allusions in it to myself, purposely in-

duced to suggest that the writer must be one of the persons whom I addressed, while conducting her inquiries. If Mrs. Lecount takes the business in hand, and lays a trap for me—I decline her tempting invitation, by becoming totally ignorant of the whole affair the instant any second person appears in it. Let the end come as it may, here I am ready to profit by it: here I am, facing both ways, with perfect ease and security—a moral agriculturalist, with his eye on two crops at once, and his swindler's sickle ready for any emergency.

For the next week to come, the newspaper will be more interesting to me than ever. I wonder which side I shall eventually belong to?

THE THIRD SCENE.

VAUXHALL WALK, LAMBETH.

CHAPTER I.

THE old Archbishopal Palace of Lambeth, on the southern bank of the Thames—with its Bishop's Walk and Garden, and its terrace fronting the river—is an architectural relic of the London of former times, precious to all lovers of the picturesque, in the utilitarian London of the present day. Southward of this venerable structure lies the street labyrinth of Lambeth; and nearly mid-way in that part of the maze of houses which is placed nearest to the river, runs the dingy double row of buildings, now, as in former days, known by the name of Vauxhall Walk.

The network of dismal streets stretching over the surrounding neighbourhood, contains a population, for the most part of the poorer order. In the thoroughfares where shops abound, the sordid struggle with poverty shows itself unreservedly on the filthy pavement; gathers its forces through the week; and, strengthening to a tumult on Saturday night, sees the Sunday morning dawn in murky gaslight. Miserable women, whose faces never smile, haunt the butchers' shops in such London localities as these, with relics of the men's wages saved from the public-house, clutched fast in their hands, with eyes that devour the meat they dare not buy, with eager fingers that touch it covetously, as the fingers of their richer sisters touch a precious stone. In this district, as in other districts remote from the wealthy quarters of the metropolis, the hideous London vagabond—with the filth of the street outmatched in his speech, with the mud of the street outdirtied in his clothes—lounges, lowering and brutal, at the street corner and the gin-shop door; the public disgrace of his country, the unheeded warning of social troubles that are yet to come. Here, the loud self-assertion of Modern Progress—which has reformed so much in manners, and altered so little in men—meets the flat contradiction that scatters its pretensions to the winds. Here, while the national prosperity feasts, like another Belshazzar, on the spectacle of its own magnificence, is the Writing on the Wall, which warns the monarch, Money, that his glory is weighed in the balance, and his power found wanting.

Situated in such a neighbourhood as this, Vauxhall Walk gains by comparison, and establishes claims to respectability which no impartial observation can fail to recognise. A large proportion of the Walk is still composed of private houses. In the scattered situations where shops appear, those shops are not besieged by the crowds of more populous thoroughfares. Commerce is not turbulent, nor is the public consumer besieged by loud invitations to "buy." Bird-fanciers have sought the congenial tranquillity of the scene; and pigeons coo, and canaries twitter, in Vauxhall Walk. Second-hand carts and cabs, bedsteads of a certain age, detached carriage-wheels for those who may want one to make up a set, are all to be found here in the same repository. One tributary stream in the great flood of gas which illuminates London, tracks its parent source to Works established in this locality. Here, the followers of John Wesley have set up a temple, built before the period of Methodist conversion to the principles of architectural religion. And here—most striking object of all—on the site where thousands of lights once sparkled; where sweet sounds of music made night tuneful till morning dawned; where the beauty and fashion of London feasted and danced through the summer seasons of a century—spreads, at this day, an awful wilderness of mud and rubbish; the deserted dead body of Vauxhall Gardens mouldering in the open air.

On the same day when Captain Wragge completed the last entry in his Chronicle of Events, a woman appeared at the window of one of the houses in Vauxhall Walk, and removed from the glass a printed paper which had been wafered to it, announcing that Apartments were to be let. The apartments consisted of two rooms on the first floor. They had just been taken for a week certain, by two ladies who had paid in advance—those two ladies being Magdalen and Mrs. Wragge.

As soon as the mistress of the house had left the room, Magdalen walked to the window, and cautiously looked out from it at the row of buildings opposite. They were of superior pretensions in size and appearance to the other houses in the Walk: the date at which they had been erected was inscribed on one of them, and was stated to be the year 1759. They stood back from the pavement, separated from it by little strips of garden-ground. This peculiarity of position, added to the breadth of the roadway interposing between them and the smaller houses opposite, made it impossible for Magdalen to see the numbers on the doors, or to observe more of any one who might come to the windows, than the bare general outline of dress and figure. Nevertheless, there she stood, anxiously fixing her eyes on one house in the row, nearly opposite to her—the house she had looked for before entering the lodgings; the house inhabited at that moment by Noel Vanstone and Mrs. Lecount.

After keeping watch at the window, in silence,

for ten minutes or more, she suddenly looked back into the room, to observe the effect which her behaviour might have produced on her travelling companion.

Not the slightest cause appeared for any apprehension in that quarter. Mrs. Wragge was seated at the table, absorbed in the arrangement of a series of smart circulars and tempting price-lists, issued by advertising tradespeople, and flung in at the cab-windows as they left the London terminus. "I've often heard tell of light reading," said Mrs. Wragge, restlessly shifting the positions of the circulars, as a child restlessly shifts the positions of a new set of toys. "Here's light reading, printed in pretty colours. Here's all the Things I'm going to buy when I'm out shopping to-morrow. Lend us a pencil, please—you won't be angry, will you?—I do so want to mark 'em off." She looked up at Magdalen, chuckled joyfully over her own altered circumstances, and beat her great hands on the table in irrepressible delight. "No cookery-book!" cried Mrs. Wragge. "No Buzzing in my head! no Captain to shave to-morrow! I'm all down at heel; my cap's on one side; and nobody bawls at me. My heart alive, here *is* a holiday and no mistake!" Her hands began to drum again on the table louder than ever, until Magdalen quieted them by presenting her with a pencil. Mrs. Wragge instantly recovered her dignity, squared her elbows on the table, and plunged into imaginary shopping for the rest of the evening.

Magdalen returned to the window. She took a chair, seated herself behind the curtain, and steadily fixed her eyes once more on the house opposite.

The blinds were down over the windows of the first floor and the second. The window of the room on the ground floor was uncovered and partly open, but no living creature came near it. Doors opened, and people came and went, in the houses on either side; children by the dozen poured out on the pavement to play, and invaded the little strips of garden-ground to recover lost balls and shuttlecocks; streams of people passed backwards and forwards perpetually; heavy waggons piled high with goods, lumbered along the road, on their way to, or their way from, the railway station near; all the daily life of the district stirred with its ceaseless activity, in every direction but one. The hours passed—and there was the house opposite, still shut up, still void of any signs of human existence, inside or out. The one object which had decided Magdalen on personally venturing herself in Vauxhall Walk—the object of studying the looks, manners, and habits of Mrs. Lecount and her master from a post of observation known only to herself—was, thus far, utterly defeated. After three hours' watching at the window, she had not even discovered enough to show her that the house was inhabited at all.

Shortly after six o'clock, the landlady disturbed Mrs. Wragge's studies by spreading the cloth for

dinner. Magdalen placed herself at the table, in a position which still enabled her to command the view from the window. Nothing happened. The dinner came to an end; Mrs. Wragge (lulled by the narcotic influences of annotating circulars and eating and drinking with an appetite sharpened by the captain's absence) withdrew to an arm-chair, and fell asleep in an attitude which would have caused her husband the acutest mental suffering; seven o'clock struck; the shadows of the summer evening lengthened stealthily on the grey pavement and the brown house-walls—and still the closed door opposite remained shut; still the one window open, showed nothing but the black blank of the room inside, lifeless and changeless as if that room had been a tomb.

Mrs. Wragge's meek snoring deepened in tone; the evening wore on drearily; it was close on eight o'clock—when an event happened at last. The street-door opposite opened for the first time, and a woman appeared on the threshold.

Was the woman Mrs. Lecount? No. As she came nearer, her dress showed her to be a servant. She had a large door-key in her hand, and was evidently going out to perform an errand. Roused, partly by curiosity—partly by the impulse of the moment, which urged her impetuous nature into action, after the passive endurance of many hours past—Magdalen snatched up her bonnet, and determined to follow the servant to her destination, wherever it might be.

The woman led her to the great thoroughfare of shops close at hand, called Lambeth Walk. After proceeding some little distance, and looking about her with the hesitation of a person not well acquainted with the neighbourhood, the servant crossed the road, and entered a stationer's shop. Magdalen crossed the road after her, and followed her in.

The inevitable delay in entering the shop, under these circumstances, made Magdalen too late to hear what the woman asked for. The first words spoken, however, by the man behind the counter, reached her ears, and informed her that the servant's object was to buy a railway Guide.

"Do you mean a Guide for this month? or a Guide for July?" asked the shopman, addressing his customer.

"Master didn't tell me which," answered the woman. "All I know is, he's going into the country the day after to-morrow."

"The day after to-morrow is the first of July," said the shopman. "The Guide your master wants, is the Guide for the new month. It won't be published till to-morrow."

Engaging to call again on the next day, the servant left the shop, and took the way that led back to Vauxhall Walk.

Magdalen purchased the first trifle she saw on the counter, and hastily returned in the same direction. The discovery she had just made was of very serious importance to her; and she felt the necessity of acting on it with as little delay as possible.

On entering the front room at the lodgings, she found Mrs. Wragge just awake, lost in drowsy bewilderment, with her cap fallen off on her shoulders, and with one of her shoes missing altogether. Magdalen endeavoured to persuade her that she was tired after her journey, and that her wisest proceeding would be to go to bed. Mrs. Wragge was perfectly willing to profit by this suggestion, provided she could find her shoe first. In looking for the shoe, she unfortunately discovered the circulars, put by on a side-table; and forthwith recovered her recollection of the earlier proceedings of the evening.

"Give us the pencil," said Mrs. Wragge, shuffling the circulars in a violent hurry. "I can't go to bed yet—I haven't half done marking down the things I want. Let's see; where did I leave off? *Try Finch's feeding-bottle for Infants*. No! there's a cross against that: the cross means I don't want it. *Comfort in the Field*. *Buckler's Indestructible Hunting Breeches*. Oh dear, dear! I've lost the place. No, I haven't! Here it is; here's my mark against it. *Elegant Cashmere Robes; strictly oriental, very grand; reduced to one pound, nineteen, and sixpence. Be in time. Only three left*. Only three! Oh, do lend us the money, and let's go and get one!"

"Not to-night," said Magdalen. "Suppose you go to bed now, and finish the circulars to-morrow? I will put them by the bedside for you; and you can go on with them as soon as you wake, the first thing in the morning."

This suggestion met with Mrs. Wragge's immediate approval. Magdalen took her into the next room, and put her to bed like a child—with her toys by her side. The room was so narrow, and the bed was so small; and Mrs. Wragge, arrayed in the white apparel proper for the occasion—with her moon-face framed round by a spacious halo of nightcap—looked so hugely and disproportionately large, that Magdalen, anxious as she was, could not repress a smile on taking leave of her travelling companion for the night.

"Aha!" cried Mrs. Wragge, cheerfully; "we'll have that Cashmere Robe to-morrow. Come here! I want to whisper something to you. Just you look at me—I'm going to sleep crooked, and the captain's not here to bawl at me!"

The front room at the lodgings contained a sofa-bedstead, which the landlady arranged betimes for the night. This done, and the candles brought in, Magdalen was left alone to shape her future course as her own thoughts counselled her.

The questions and answers which had passed in her presence that evening, at the stationer's shop, led plainly to the conclusion that one day more would bring Noel Vanstone's present term of residence in Vauxhall Walk to an end. Her first cautious resolution to pass many days together in unsuspected observation of the house opposite, before she ventured herself inside, was entirely frustrated by the turn events had taken. She was

placed in the dilemma of running all risks headlong on the next day—or of pausing for a future opportunity, which might never occur. There was no middle course open to her. Until she had seen Noel Vanstone with her own eyes, and had discovered the worst there was to fear from Mrs. Lecount—until she had achieved this double object, with the needful precaution of keeping her own identity carefully in the dark—not a step could she advance towards the accomplishment of the purpose which had brought her to London.

One after another, the minutes of the night passed away; one after another, the thronging thoughts followed each other over her mind—and still she reached no conclusion; still she faltered and doubted, with a hesitation new to her in her experience of herself. At last she crossed the room impatiently, to seek the trivial relief of unlocking her trunk, and taking from it the few things that she wanted for the night. Captain Wragge's suspicions had not misled him. There, hidden between two dresses, were the articles of costume which he had missed from her box at Birmingham. She turned them over one by one, to satisfy herself that nothing she wanted had been forgotten, and returned once more to her post of observation by the window.

The house opposite was dark down to the parlour. There, the blind, previously raised, was now drawn over the window: the light burning behind it, showed her for the first time that the room was inhabited. Her eyes brightened, and her colour rose as she looked at it.

"There he is!" she said to herself, in a low angry whisper. "There he lives on our money, in the house that his father's warning has closed against me!" She dropped the blind which she had raised to look out; returned to her trunk; and took from it the grey wig which was part of her dramatic costume, in the character of the North-country lady. The wig had been crumpled in packing: she put it on, and went to the toilette-table to comb it out. "His father has warned him against Magdalen Vanstone," she said, repeating the passage in Mrs. Lecount's letter, and laughing bitterly as she looked at herself in the glass. "I wonder whether his father has warned him against Miss Garth? To-morrow is sooner than I bargained for. No matter: to-morrow shall show."

THE ROYAL MARRIAGE ACT.

LONG sunshine to the marriage between an English princess and the nephew of the Grand Duke of Hesse Darmstadt! Doubtless there is all reason why their union should be a happy one, true though it be that the married happiness of English princes and princesses must come in spite—not because of—the Royal Marriage Act: an act against which it is quite time that somebody should protest as a shackle on royalty that we can all—princes and people—very well afford to strike off.

Little more than a century has passed since

George the Third came to the throne now graced by his granddaughter, whose territories have been acquired by the energy of England; not one acre of them do we derive from our German connexions. It was the boast of the young king, on his accession, that he was the first of his house who had been "born and bred a Briton." Educated by his mother, a princess of Saxe Gotha who had been trained in the belief, dominant still in one Prussian head, that a German potentate is the divine master of his people, he inherited his disposition to take more than a fair share of power. The great use of the Whig party in those days, was, that it distinctly fought, on behalf of the constitutional rights of the people, the most necessary battle against all undue stretching of the king's prerogatives. As Elector of Hanover, King George was a member of that confederation of princes forming the Germanic empire. The supremacy in this empire was not acquired by hereditary descent; it was elective; and its chosen head assumed to wear the diadem of the Cæsars, as successor to the Emperors of Ancient Rome. It was one of the rights—or wrongs—attached to that sovereignty, that when a prince of the empire married a lady of inferior rank, she was denied her husband's title, and her children also were denied the right of succession, if she married without the sanction of an imperial patent. That provision can be traced to the military policy of the northern conquerors, adopted from the barbarous code of their Teutonic ancestors; and it was submitted to by the Germanic sovereigns, because the reward of submission was a voice in the election of the emperor, and a personal right of elevation to the same high office. Still, we are assured by Gibbon that the first Duke of Brunswick and Lunenburg was rather degraded than adorned by his newly acquired title of Elector of Hanover, since it imposed the obligation of feudal service on his free and patrimonial estates. From the restraint on the laws of nature resulting from the exercise of that prerogative of patent-granting, arose what was called the *Morganatic Marriage*—a ceremonial in which a German prince took to his wife a woman of inferior rank by giving her his left hand instead of his right: in sign that she, while accepting that hand, should not rise to her husband's station, and that the children of the marriage, though legitimate by birth, were to be bastardised as to inheritance. Such a marriage was called *morganatic* because the *morganatica* or dowry paid on the wedding morning was held to be payment in lieu of all other property right.

It was one of the feudal wrongs which drove the Norman barons to revolt in the days of John, that the heir was forced to marry according to the choice of his lord. That restriction was modified by the great charter which the barons wrung from the dejected tyrant at Runnymede. A system of bondage originally perhaps derived from the Hebrews, was, nevertheless, by a forced construction of that title to our liberties, retained in the control exercised

by the great lords over the villeins on their domains. It continued to be one of the distinctive badges of serfdom in the few despotie countries where serfdom prevailed. It is still a badge of slavery in the Southern American States, that the owner is entitled to exercise over his slave's marriage the same control that he has over the pairing of the inferior animals on his estates.

In the reign of Charles the Second, hereditary feuds were extinguished in England, and the last remnant ceased on the abolition of the Court of Wards. One of the earliest acts of our first Hanoverian sovereign, George the First, was to revive, in 1717, the claim of wardship over his grandchildren, to the exclusion of their father. Adopting that example, George the Third introduced into the laws of England a control to which he was himself subject only as an electoral prince within his Hanoverian states; this being, in fact, the only change in its law that England has ever derived from Germany. It is a control which, disregarding natural attachments and remote degrees of relationship, seeks to prohibit the marriages of *all* descendants of royal blood without the previous express assent of the sovereign, and, in the event of the solemnisation of such contract, empowers human prejudice and human passion to annul a rite, sanctified by divine authority, and brand with degradation the unborn. The admonition of ages was disregarded, that families with progenitors of aristocratic exclusiveness, "the tenth transmitters of a foolish face," first dwindling into sterility, have died out from exhaustion, and that the periodical infusion of new blood into alliances is an essential element in the vigorous perpetuation of the human race.

The project of the Royal Marriage Act was first announced by a message from the throne to parliament on the 20th of February, 1773, demanding some new provision more effectually to guard the descendants of George the Second, other than the issue of princesses who have married or may hereafter marry into *foreign* families, from marrying without the approbation of the crown. In a private letter of the 26th of that month to Lord North, then prime minister, the king—whose chief characteristic was unbending obstinacy—gave the following very distinct monitory intimation of his purpose: "I expect every nerve to be strained to carry the bill. It is not a question of administration, but personal to myself; and therefore I have a right to expect a hearty support from every one in my service, and I shall remember defaulters." He resolved to follow up this declaration; for, in a subsequent letter of the 14th of March to the same minister, he thus expressed himself: "I wish a list could be prepared of those that went away, and of those that deserted to the minority on division. That would be the rule of my conduct in the drawing-room to-morrow." The rule of conduct thus avowed was rigidly observed in hostility through life to Mr. Fox, who resisted the measure; and we are assured

by Horace Walpole that "his implacability against those who opposed the Marriage Act proves it is his own act." Forced upon an obsequious minister, the measure was subsequently wrung out of a servile parliament.

The arbitrary instincts of the king had been excited and roused into action by the singular domestic relations of his royal brothers. Among other peculiarities, it is perhaps remarkable that widows have been in general preferred by princes of the house of Brunswick. Edward Augustus Duke of York, the eldest brother, died in 1767 at Monaco, then in Italy but now in France. It was believed by many that he had formed an attachment for, and was bound either by a secret marriage or a solemn pledge to, the Lady Mary Coke, one of the Campbell sisters, a daughter and co-heiress of John, the celebrated Duke of Argyll. The fair widow of Edward Viscount Coke, eldest son of the then Earl of Leicester, considered herself married to the eldest of the royal dukes, subscribed her name in the regal style, and on his death wore widow's weeds.

The marriage of the king's second brother, William Henry Duke of Gloucester, with Maria Countess Dowager of Waldegrave, had been secretly solemnised in 1766, and although suspected or perhaps known, had not been publicly avowed. In the position of the royal duke and his duchess there were some remarkable features. The title of Waldegrave was a creation of James the Second in the person of Sir Henry Waldegrave, Baronet, who, in 1686, became Baron Waldegrave. He had married Henrietta Fitz-James, a daughter of the king by Arabella Churchill, sister of the great Duke of Marlborough, and Henrietta was sister to the celebrated James Fitz-James Duke of Berwick. The young Lord Waldegrave, having embraced the religion of the exiled king, followed his fortunes to France, where he died in 1689, leaving his widow with an only son, James, who succeeded to his father's title. He attached himself to the rising fortunes of the house of Churchill, and abandoned the faith of the fallen Stuarts. Reproached in after-life for this abandonment by his uncle the Duke of Berwick—"Was it not from worldly motives that you conformed? Come, confess it!" The young lord replied, "It was to avoid confession, your grace, that I became a Protestant!" He was created Earl of Waldegrave in 1729, and it was his son James, the second earl, great-grandson of James the Second, who became by the changes and revenges brought about by time, the governor of George the Third during his minority as Prince of Wales, and, before that sovereign's accession to the throne, prime minister of England. When rather advanced in life, he married, in 1759, Maria Walpole, the illegitimate daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, Baronet, second son of the great minister Sir Robert. Maria Walpole was many years younger than her husband, and Horace Walpole, who invariably expresses for his niece the affection of a father, thus describes her: "Maria is beauty itself; her face, bloom, eyes, hair, teeth,

are all perfect. You may imagine how charming she is, when her only fault, if one must find one, is, that her face is rather too round, and she has a great deal of wit and vivacity, with perfect modesty." The earl died in 1763, leaving three daughters by his widow; and although she dedicated to his memory a laudatory epitaph, in which she subscribed herself as "the once happy wife, and now the remembrancer of his virtues," the title of Duchess of Gloucester very naturally weaned her from her sorrows.

The third brother of the king, Henry Frederick Duke of Cumberland, was only remarkable for the profligacy of his career, and the libertinism of his amours, without any of those qualities which in some eyes render libertinism attractive. In 1820 the British public were startled by an announcement headed, "Discovery of a Royal Princess." A person of the name of Olive or Olivia Wilmot Serres pretended to be the offspring of a private marriage alleged to have taken place in 1767 between the Duke of Cumberland and Olivia Wilmot, who was said to have been the daughter of a clergyman of that name. As the date fixed for this union, if there were any foundation for the story, was prior to the Royal Marriage Act, the issue, if any, would have been legitimate. This impudent attempt to imitate the Perkin Warbeck imposition, was sought to be sustained by documents apparently bearing the signatures of eminent public characters, then dead. The entire deception and the fabrication of the papers were triumphantly exposed on the 18th of June, 1823, by the late Sir Robert Peel, in parliament. The pretender turned out to be the daughter of a house-painter in Warwick, and to have been baptised in the parish church of that borough on the 15th of April, 1772, as the daughter of Robert and Mary Ann Wilmot. This woman also put forward pretensions to be a Polish princess, alleging that her mother had been the legitimate daughter of Stanislaus, who had been placed by Charles the Twelfth on the throne of Poland, and consequently sister of Marie Leskinski, the queen of Louis the Fifteenth of France. There was of course as little reality in this claim as in the other. The Duke of Cumberland's chief reputation was earned as defendant in 1770 in an action for the seduction of the young wife of Richard Lord Grosvenor, in which the damages were assessed at ten thousand pounds. The infidelities of the lord were held to palliate the offence of the lady, and we are assured by Horace Walpole, that so far from the result being deemed a dishonour by either, it seemed uncertain which was the more proud of the distinction—the husband or the wife. The heartless abandonment of this victim for the wife of a rich city merchant, speedily followed. She also was in turn deserted, and the indignation of the king was aroused by public announcement of this brother's marriage on the 2nd of October, 1771: a step which was said to be the only virtuous act of his life. It was first announced in the Public Advertiser by a note from Junius, under the heading—"Intelligence

extraordinary, though true." "This match, we are informed, was negotiated by a certain duke and his cream-coloured parasite by way of reward to Colonel Luttrell. It is now, happily for this country, within the limits of possibility that a Luttrell may be king of Great Britain." The lady thus elevated to the title of Her Royal Highness was the daughter of Simon Luttrell, and the widow of Colonel Christopher Horton, of Catton Hall, Derbyshire. Her father had been created, in 1768, Baron Irnham, in the peerage of Ireland, and was, after the alliance of his family with royalty, raised to the dignity of Earl Carhampton. Horace Walpole thus describes the royal bride: "The new princess of the blood is a young widow of twenty-four, extremely pretty, not handsome, very well made, with the most amorous eyes in the world, and eyelashes a yard long—coquette beyond measure, artful as Cleopatra, and completely mistress of all her passions and projects. Indeed, eyelashes three-quarters of a yard shorter would have served to conquer such a head as she has turned. I need not hint to you how unfortunate an event this is at the present moment, and how terribly it clashes with the situation of another person whom I most heartily pity, and whom I did all I could to preserve from falling into so cruel a position."

The family to which this new duchess belonged was in the worst repute. We have the authority of Sir Robert Heron, Baronet, in his published Notes, that "Lady Elizabeth Luttrell resided with her sister, the Duchess of Cumberland, played high, and cheated much. She was commonly called the Princess Elizabeth. On the death of her sister, in 1809, she was thrown into jail; there she gave a hairdresser fifty pounds to marry her; her debts then becoming his, she was discharged. She went abroad, where she descended still lower and lower, until being convicted of picking pockets at Augsburg, she was condemned to clean the streets, chained to a wheelbarrow. In that miserable state she terminated her existence by poison."

The king, then, had from his brothers strong provocation to the personal feeling with which he urged the passing of the Royal Marriage Act. But during the last ninety years great, indeed, have been the changes for the better in the tone of English society. In no class has the improvement been more marked than in the very highest, which the perpetuation of this measure tends peculiarly to degrade.

The king's anger did not deter the Duke of Gloucester from avowing as his consort the Countess Dowager of Waldegrave, whom he had previously espoused. That avowal was first made in a letter from the lady to her father, a letter worthy of an English wife:

St. Leonards, May 19th, 1772.

My dear and ever Honoured Sir,—You cannot easily imagine how much every past affliction has been increased to me, by not being at liberty to make you quite easy. The duty to a husband being superior to that we owe to a father, I hope will plead

my pardon, and that instead of blaming my past reserve you will consider it commendable.

When the Duke of Gloucester married me (which was in September, 1766), I promised him on no consideration in the world to own it, *even to you*, without his permission, which permission I never had till yesterday, when he arrived here in much better health and looks than I ever saw him; yet, as you may suppose, much hurt at all that has passed in his absence; so much so, that I have had great difficulty to prevail upon him to let things as much as possible remain as they are. To secure my character, without injuring *his*, is the utmost of my wishes; and I dare say you and all my relations will agree with me, that I shall be much happier to be called Lady Waldegrave, and respected as the Duchess of Gloucester, than to feel myself the cause of his leading such a life as his brother does, in order for me to be called your royal highness. I am prepared for the sort of abuse the newspapers will be full of. Very few people will believe that a woman will refuse to be called princess, if in her power!

To have the power is my pride; and not using it in some measure pays the debt I owe the duke for the honour he has done me.

All I wish of my relations is, that they will show the world that they are satisfied with my conduct, yet seem to disguise their reasons.

If ever I am unfortunate enough to be called Duchess of Gloucester, there is an end of almost all the comforts which I now enjoy, which, if things go on as they now are, are many.

Your most affectionate and dutiful daughter,

M. G.

Her father, while enclosing a copy of it to Horace Walpole, characterised the letter, "as one of the sweetest samples of sense, language, and goodness of heart, that I ever saw." His brother avows that, until he read it, he had withheld his approval, being too much of a courtier to wound the pride of the king. He thus describes his sensations on its perusal: "I sent my brother word that I had been ready to kiss his daughter's hand, but that I was now ready to kiss her feet. It struck me with astonishment, admiration, and tenderness, and, I confess, with shame. How mean did my prudence appear compared with hers, which was void of all personal consideration, but her honour. What proper spirit, what amiable concern for and gratitude to her husband; what scorn of the Duke of Cumberland, of rank, of malice, and (at least implied) of the king and his power! What sense in her conduct! I have always thought that feeling bestows the most sublime eloquence!" On the public announcement of their nuptials, the two royal brothers and their consorts were summarily banished from the court.

The choice of Charlotte Sophia, a daughter of the house of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, as a consort for George the Third, did not exhibit a very refined sense of female loveliness in those to whom the selection had been confided. When the intended bride saw the Duchesses of Hamilton and Ancaster, two of the most brilliant beauties of the day, who had been sent to accompany her to England, conscious of the possession of no such attractions, and abashed by the contrast, she in-

quired, "Are all the ladies of England as beautiful as you?" Court gossip had apprised her that her intended lord had already tendered his heart to a subject—the most beautiful girl of the day—the Lady Sarah Lennox, daughter of a ducal house, in whose veins flowed the blood of the Stuarts. The future mother of the Napiers would have been a consort worthy of a sovereign. Her son, Sir William Napier, the historian of the Peninsular wars of Wellington, in his memoirs of his brother Charles, the conqueror of Scinde, states that, "When scarcely eighteen years of age, George the Third offered her his hand. She refused; he persisted, and was finally accepted, partly because of his apparently sincere passion, partly from the influence of her brother-in-law, the first Lord Holland. But the politicians worked on royal pride, hurt by the first refusal, and the monarch fell back." Although the German precedent of a morganatic marriage would not have satisfied the purer delicacy of the English lady, still, probably with a view to tranquillise the apprehensions of the queen, Lady Sarah Lennox appeared as the first of the royal bridesmaids at the wedding. The rank of those of her own family who attended the bride would seem not to have entitled the queen to assume any very lofty airs; her brother, Charles Louis Frederick, who was present, being but a colonel in a regiment of Hanoverian foot guards. Educated in the prejudiced traditions of a German house, her majesty constantly boasted of purer blood than her lord, and often reproached him with the stain in his lineage by the union a hundred years before with the noble French family of D'Olbseuse. At a dinner given by her at Frogmore, there were present with her children some foreign members of the house of Brunswick. One of the guests having remarked that every person at the table was descended from the Electress Sophia, the Queen started, and haughtily pointing to her heart, exclaimed, "Il n'y a pas de D'Olbseuse ici!" Married herself, and surrounded by every earthly enjoyment, his German spouse was earnest and unceasing in pressing the king to enforce the most rigid restrictions on the natural rights and connubial happiness of future generations.

Under the pressure of those various influences, the Royal Marriage Act was forced with precipitation through parliament. Its preamble adopted the language of the message from the crown, and its first provision prohibited any descendants of George the Second, male or female, other than the issue of princesses, who have married or may hereafter marry into foreign families, from contracting matrimony without the consent of the crown signified under the great seal, and declared every such marriage null and void. Its second provision enabled any member of the royal family above the age of twenty-five, to contract a valid marriage, although dissented from by the crown, by giving twelve months' previous notice to the privy council, unless both Houses of Parliament should, before the expiration of that period, express their disapprobation. Its third and last provision de-

clared that every person who should solemnise, assist, or be present at any royal marriage without such consent, should incur the penalties of a præmunire, as provided by the statute made in the sixteenth year of King Richard the Second. The second provision was introduced apparently to mitigate the severity of the first, but its absurdities were glaring. In the succession to the crown, a member of the royal family was competent to sway the sceptre at eighteen, to be regent at twenty-one, but not to choose a consort until over twenty-five. This preposterous innovation led at the time to the following epigram:

Quoth Dick to Tom, this act appears
Absurd, as I'm alive,
To take the crown at eighteen years,
The wife at twenty-five.

The mystery how shall we explain?
For sure as wise men said,
Thus early if they're fit to reign,
They must be fit to wed.

Quoth Tom to Dick, thou art a fool!
And little know'st of life—
Alas, 'tis easier far to rule
A kingdom than a wife!

The penalties of a præmunire—a corruption of the Latin word *præmonere*, to forewarn, originally devised to check papal interference in state affairs—were adopted from a barbaric age and the unfortunate reign of our feeblest monarch. Horace Walpole states that this silly provision was left by its devisers, in the bill, "in order that nobody might be punished: a secret they probably did not tell the king!"

The bill was prepared by Henry Bathurst, who was raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Apsley. We learn from Lord Campbell that "although when attorney-general to Frederick Prince of Wales, his master being at variance with George the Second, he had seen great reason to doubt the asserted authority of the king respecting the marriage of his descendants, now, as chancellor to George the Third, he had all his doubts cleared up," and supported the measure in his maiden speech as a peer.

The bill was strongly opposed in the House of Lords. Amongst others by Lord Camden, who had been lord chancellor, and whose talents as a great lawyer and unprecedented popularity as a constitutional judge had elevated him to the peerage. Lord Campbell declares: "He was one of the brightest ornaments of my profession and my party, for I glory, like him, in the name of Whig." "When the Royal Marriage Act was brought forward," while "he admitted that some regulations were necessary to prevent the mésalliance of those near the throne," he strongly resisted the bill. "His manliness," observes his biographer, "deserves great credit, considering that the reigning sovereign was resolved to carry the bill as originally framed against the advice of several of his ministers, and had expressed himself personally offended with all who questioned its wisdom." The opposition was unavailing, for, according to Horace Walpole, "the king grew dictatorial, and all his creatures

kissed his feet." Strong protests were left on record; one, from the pen of Burke, bears, together with ducal signatures, the name of Charles Wentworth Marquis of Rockingham, twice prime minister. In the House of Commons the measure was discussed with closed doors, the public being excluded from the galleries and the entrances being locked, as if the members were ashamed of the deed they were doing. The constitutional lore and splendid declamation of Burke, the manly eloquence of Fox, were unavailing. We quote again from Walpole: "Zeal, and money, and all influence went to work; the ears were closed in which golden infusion had been poured." Henry Lawes Luttrell affected to be indignant at the dishonour aimed at his sister, and even threatened to turn patriot. Gibbon, in a letter to Lord Sheffield, says: "The noise of Luttrell is subsided, but there was some foundation for it. The colonel's expenses in his bold enterprise, the Middlesex election, were yet unpaid by government. The hero threatened, assumed the patriot, received a sop, and again sunk into a courtier." In the language of Walpole, "Never was an act passed against which so much, and for which so little, was said." To its other claims upon the country was added this—it owed its existence to corruption.

The measure was hateful to the public; it rendered the title even of Cumberland, when its duke became the victim of court persecution, popular. Goldsmith thus alludes to it in his comedy of *She Stoops to Conquer*, which was first produced on the 13th of March, 1773. When her lover urges Miss Neville to elope, he exclaims, "If my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall be soon landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected." The Duke of Gloucester was present on the night of the first performance, and such was the public sympathy excited, that the audience at once applied the allusion to his brother, and testified their feeling in a burst of applause. The Duke of Cumberland and his bride had proceeded to Italy, and were received by the Papal courts at Rome with royal honours; the dome of St. Peter's was illuminated with peculiar splendour to greet their arrival. This reception was designed to mark reprobation of a measure which was supposed to annul a religious rite. The honours so paid deeply mortified the surviving Stuarts, Charles Edward and Henry Benedict, Cardinal of York, then resident, as pensioners of the Pope, at Rome.

Horace Walpole, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, of the 29th of May, 1773, thus alludes to the birth of the first child of the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, the Princess Sophia Matilda: "The Duchess of Gloucester was delivered of a princess this day; so even their holidays are taken from the Stuarts." It would seem from the same communication that the king had on that occasion relented: "The marriages of the two royal dukes, at the request of his Highness of Gloucester, have been authen-

ticated this week. The king sent the archbishop, the chancellor, and Bishop of London, this day se'nnight, to examine the proofs and report them, with their opinions. They declared themselves fully satisfied with the validity of both marriages, made their report in full council before the king last Wednesday, and the depositions were entered in the council books. You will be surprised after this account that the good-natured part of the duchess's sex has opened its triple mouths to question the legality of the Duke of Gloucester's marriage, because there were no witnesses. The law of England requires none. The declaration of the parties is sufficient. . . . The duke was advised to be married again with the king's consent, but he had too much sense to take such silly counsel, though the king would have allowed it. The duke, however, submitted to the king's pleasure if it should be thought necessary, though fully satisfied himself of its validity. The king sent him word by the archbishop, that as his royal highness was satisfied, and as his majesty had heard no objection to the validity, he did not think any further steps necessary. In fact, the noise of those who repine at the duchess's exaltation is a proof that they are convinced her marriage is indissoluble." The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester subsequently visited the Continent, and their eldest son, William Frederick, the future Duke of Gloucester, was born on the 15th of January, 1776, at Rome. So marked was the attention which this royal couple also received there during their residence, that in the same year Calleteti, a bookseller, who had inscribed some dramatic works to the duke, was banished by the Papal court for the offence of having omitted "royal" in the dedication. They subsequently appeared at several foreign courts, and Horace Walpole, writing on the 14th of May, 1777, again to Sir Horace Mann, who was British envoy at the court of Tuscany, assures him, "She has not at all forgotten that she was not royally born. I am sure you found her as easy and natural as if she had not married even Lord Waldegrave. When she left England her beauty had lost no more than her good qualities. I am glad your court has behaved to her as they ought. I am glad the English see there is no nation so contemptibly servile as our own." The excellent but unprepossessing qualities of the Duchess of Gloucester, although not a high born subject, won the affections and admiration of all the royal family to which she had become allied.

We learn from the court gossip of Cornelia Knight, that George the Fourth, when Prince Regent, was not free from apprehensions that his daughter the Princess Charlotte of Wales would have selected her cousin of Gloucester as her future consort. Royal pride even afterwards descended to bestow the hand of his cousin the Princess Mary, fourth daughter of George the Third, with the required consent of the crown, on the son of Maria Walpole, and the grandson of Dorothy Clement, the milliner's apprentice from Durham, William Frederick, Duke of

Gloucester. The marriage was solemnised on the 22nd of July, 1816, at Buckingham House, then the palace of Queen Charlotte. By a singular coincidence the two dukedoms, which furnished the pretext for the Royal Marriage Act, have both become extinct, and no descendants of George the Second can be traced through either of their matrimonial alliances.

Chatham was in retirement when the measure passed. In a letter to Lord Shelburne, he thus denounced it: "The doctrine of the Royal Marriage Bill is certainly new-fangled and impudent; the extent of the powers it gives the crown is wanton and tyrannical." Chatham, had he been minister then, might have shown the king that foreign princes do not always make the best of husbands, and recalling memorable examples in his majesty's own immediate family, might have pointed to that remarkable episode in Hanoverian history, the tragic fate of Dorothea Sophia of Zell, through whom he derived much of his German patrimony and his birth.

There was a still nearer and dearer connexion of the king, whose fate ought to have induced him to pause. Caroline Matilda, the favourite sister of George the Third, in one of those unions of consanguinity, which the strongest predilections of consanguinity could not draw closer, had married with royal approval the Crown Prince, afterwards Christian the Seventh, son of Frederick the Fifth of Denmark and Louisa, daughter of George the Second. "She had been linked," in the language of Earl Stanhope, "with an abject wretch, destitute alike of sense and virtue;" but that wretch was first cousin of his bride. The fatal night of the 16th of January, 1772, little more than a month before the royal message to parliament, witnessed an English princess, the sister and wife of a king, the mother of a future king, subjected to indignities resembling those which eighty years before had been endured by her great grandmother, the injured Sophia of Zell. Queen Matilda, suddenly aroused from sleep in her own palace, was informed of her arrest. Neither her station nor her sex received respect. Attempting, in the frenzy of despair, to reach the chamber of her husband, she was rudely repelled by the bayonets of a brutal soldiery; and only half attired, with an infant in her arms, was hurried away to the castle of Croningsberg. There, in a land of strangers, and surrounded by spies, she endured a close captivity of four months, terminated by the manly intrepidity of Colonel Murray Keith, the British envoy at Copenhagen, and by the menacing attitude of England. This victim of a royal marriage with a foreign prince at last found refuge in a British ship of war. Fact might have been set against fact, and argument thus held that marriages of consanguinity with foreign princes were not necessary to secure the happiness of the princesses of England.

As the malady which in after times clouded the mind of the king cleared away, he saw some melancholy consequences of the measure he had forced upon this country. Scandals sullied the fair fame of one at least of his daughters.

George Prince of Wales had been early fascinated by the charms of Mary Anne Smythe, better known as Mrs. FitzHerbert. His love was known to the ballad-monger:

I'd crowns resign,
To call thee mine,
Sweet lass of Richmond Hill!

In kneeling at her feet he affected to emulate the most illustrious of his predecessors, Edward the Black Prince, who had given his hand in lawful wedlock to the celebrated Joan, the once fair maid of Kent, when, like Mrs. FitzHerbert, she too was in her second widowhood.

The Royal Marriage Act enabled the son of the king who imposed it on us, having married this lady, to violate his plighted faith, and gratify the German predilections of his father by his ill-assorted union with a foreign princess, Caroline Sophia of Brunswick, the wife, not of his choice, but of his aversion. In that union the ties of German consanguinity were again drawn as close as nature would endure. The eldest son of George the Third was married to the daughter of the eldest sister of the king.

Honest and binding marriage to the woman of his choice might have made almost a man even of George the Fourth. The Marriage Act helped largely to make him what he was. It would have saved the deliberations of the most august judicial assembly in the empire from odious disclosures; it would have saved the confidential advisers of the crown from the ignominy of discomfiture; and the nation from the sin and shame and sorrow of an example, which terminated in the degradation, and ultimately in the death, of the erring but persecuted Caroline of Brunswick.

Then we have had—all the immorality being in the operation of the Royal Marriage Act—the Sussex Peerage case. Augustus Frederick Duke of Sussex, the sixth son of George the Third, on the 21st of March, 1793, at Rome, entered into the most solemn matrimonial contract with the Lady Augusta Murray, second daughter of the Earl and Countess of Dunmore. That contract was still further consecrated by a marriage solemnised on the 3rd of April, in the Papal city, by a clergyman of the Church of England, and the ceremony was again repeated on the 5th of December following, in St. George's church, Hanover-square. On the event becoming known to the king, a suit was instituted by him in the royal name to annul the marriage. The prohibitory provision in the Act was alone relied on to defeat its validity, and in August, 1794, the king obtained a decree declaratory of its nullity. On the death of the royal duke his eldest son, Augustus Frederick d'Este, as heir, in 1843 claimed, in right of his mother's marriage, the honours and dignities of his father, the dukedom of Sussex, the earldom of Inverness, and the baronage of Arklow. The petition having been referred to the House of Lords, Cardinal Wiseman, then a Roman Catholic bishop, appeared at the bar of that assembly, as a witness to sustain the marriage as valid according to Roman law. The late

Lord Chancellor of England, Lord Campbell, declared, "The evidence which has been given to us of the Roman law, uncontradicted as it is, would prove that a marriage at Rome of English Protestants, according to the rites of their own Church, would be recognised as a marriage by the Roman law, and therefore would be a marriage all over the world. But when we come to the Royal Marriage Act, it seems to me that there is an insuperable bar to the validity of the marriage." Such was the unanimous opinion and decision of the Peers; annulment, by this most immoral law, of a Protestant marriage between British-born subjects, which even the Romish Church would recognise.

The Duke of Sussex, long after the death of his first wife, entered into a second marriage with the Lady Cecilia Letitia Gore, the widow of Sir George Buggin, who, during her widowhood, had assumed her mother's name of Underwood. Her second marriage with the royal duke being also without the previous assent of the crown, she never claimed or assumed the title of royal highness. Her majesty, however, in 1840, during the lifetime of her royal husband, raised this lady to ducal rank as Duchess of Inverness, according to her husband's title. The restrictive measure which we have arraigned exceeds in the cruelty of its pressure on the innocent the marriage act of the most despotic of English sovereigns. Henry the Eighth imposed the penalties of treason upon any person contracting an unauthorised marriage with one of the king's children. One of the first acts of the promising reign of his young successor, Edward the Sixth, was to repeal that enactment. The clandestine marriage in 1560 of the Lady Catherine Gray of the royal blood—her presumptive to the crown under the will of Henry the Eighth, if the Princess Elizabeth should die without issue—would accordingly have been valid. The Star Chamber did arbitrarily imprison the earl, but the children, if any, would have been legitimate. The same would have been the result with the issue of the secret marriage between the Lady Arabella Stuart and William Seymour, although it sent them both to the Tower. Until this German custom was engrafted upon English law, we find no edict which visits with perpetual degradation the innocent and unborn offspring of parents professing the same religious creed, whose hands had been solemnly joined by a rite recognised as sacred.

Before the days of the Royal German Marriage Act, a daughter of England was never thought unworthy to be the wife of an English prince. Three of the six sovereigns of the house of Stuart, and three of the four sovereigns of the house of Tudor, were born of royal marriages with subjects. William the Norman, from whom the long line of English royalty deduces its descent, was even proud of the plebeian birth of his mother Arlotta, the daughter of a tanner. Henry of Monmouth, the Fifth of England, the hero of Agincourt, was the son of a subject, Mary Bohun, daughter of the Earl of Hereford.

John of Gaunt, "time-honoured Lancaster," son of Edward the Third, accepted Catherine Swinford, then a widow, as his third wife. Thus he and Chaucer married sisters. The founder of the royal line of Tudor was the son of Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond, and Margaret Beaufort, only child of John Duke of Somerset. Horace Walpole, in his *Historic Doubts*, describes the marriage of Henry Tudor with Elizabeth, the daughter of Henry the Fourth, as an alliance between an illegitimate branch of the house of Lancaster and an illegitimate branch of the house of York. Two negatives making an affirmative, a legitimate heir to the throne was thus obtained. Margaret, the eldest daughter of Henry the Seventh, had married first the King of Scotland, and secondly the Earl of Angus, and from these two marriages, James the First, the son of Henry Darnley, a subject, derived his title to the united crowns. Edward the Sixth was the son of Jane Seymour, an English lady. Elizabeth, whose reign is surrounded with glorious associations, contrasting so strikingly with that of her sister of foreign and royal birth, in the maternal line traced her lineage through her mother, Anna Boleyn, to a citizen of London.

The consorts of foreign birth and royal blood, of the three succeeding sovereigns of the house of Stuart acquired only the hatred of the nation. To Henrietta Maria of France, the haughty and intolerant daughter of Henry of Navarre, may be traced many of the calamities of civil war, and perhaps the ultimate fate of her vacillating and treacherous husband Charles the First. His profligate son Charles the Second, expressed his readiness to wed an English wife, if one sufficiently wealthy could be found to satiate his avarice. Ultimately, his corrupt acceptance of age and ugliness was purchased by the rich dowry of a royal and foreign bride, Catherine of Braganza, a union without honour and without offspring. The first marriage of his brother, James the Second, when Duke of York, with Ann Hyde, an English girl, the daughter of a barrister, then in the Temple, although afterwards ennobled by the title of Clarendon, gave to the nation two queens, Mary, whose alliance with William of Orange made way for our happy revolution, and her sister Anne. The traditional name of the "good Queen Anne," is not yet forgotten in England, and while the comeliness of her person attested the homeliness of her birth, it was her constant boast that she was "entirely English." The weak and bigoted Mary Este, the second and foreign consort of the worthless father of Queen Anne, was the source of a long and unbroken series of calamities to the Stuarts and to the country. Strongly marked was the contrast between the worthless offspring of the foreign union with royal blood and the son of the English mother.

The dynastic difficulties which arose from the rival claims of remote or collateral lineals in the days of the Plantagenets are gone; the conspiracies which deluged England with blood in those of the Tudors, in our altered social and

constitutional relations, cannot be repeated. Our repose is no longer startled by the phantom of a disputed succession. The race of the Stuarts has perished and passed away. The prerogative of assent once claimed as a fief by the elected head of the Germanic Empire on the marriage of an electoral prince ceased on the extinction of that dignity in 1806, and the creation of the inferior and limited title of Emperor of Austria. By his act of abdication, Francis the Second—the last Emperor of Germany—formally absolved all the princes of the confederation from the fealty which they owed to him as their chief. The reconstruction of the empire is expressly forbidden by the modern federation of the German states. What pretence can there be, then, for continuing in England a power of prohibition adopted from our Hanoverian connexion, from which even that German crown has been exempted? Even if it were in force there, we have long since sent back its crown jewels to Hanover.

There is no policy to justify, there is everything to make England despise and disdain, the pitiful support to be derived from matrimonial alliances with petty German princes. The Anglo-Saxon race asserts and sustains its supremacy in every country and in every clime. Shall the highest of our young nobility at home, alone remain subject to the Hindoo distinctions of caste? Why are we to exclude those ennobled by ancestral honours, pre-eminent for intellectual or acquired endowments, or illustrious by glorious achievements, if "born and bred Britons," from the more intimate and more affectionate relations of that domestic circle, within which the purest private virtues dignify a royal home? Why are we to limit so closely for our sovereigns the chances of domestic happiness, by a custom that leaves to an English princess only about a dozen men from among whom her husband must be sought?

THUGGEE IN IRELAND.

IN Ireland a mysterious spirit of vindication seems to come equally from utter destitution, and from extreme comfort and prosperity. A sort of wantonness gets into a nation's veins as well from an over-richness of blood as from a thinness and poorness in that circulating fluid. The same acidity breaks out in either case.

The crime of murder, indeed, in various shapes, is growing fast to be a notorious and unenviable characteristic of the British isles. In Great Britain, the forefinger will grow weary, running down a tabulated column of the useful "judicial statistics," set apart for this horrid crime; and judges of assize find themselves, as in a recent Liverpool "jail delivery," almost broken down with the duty of investigating the revolting details of nearly one dozen and a half of murders. The poisoned bowl, the bludgeon, and the knife, are the popular instruments of the British assassin; the rusty single barrel and the heavy slug, those of the Irish. The guilty domestic mansion, or the retired suburb, is the favourite

scenery of the one; the open country road, the hedge, and a starlight night, are the traditional accessories of the other.

Without rambling off into the eternal "tenant right," it may be said that one reason why this barbarity still endures in Ireland, must be placed to the account of the peculiar social position of the Irish peasant. With him his scrap of land, be it only the size of a small room, is a necessary of life, as much as bread and meat are to other men. He is not an agriculturist, and he does not spin, professionally. Once this support is taken from him (and he may be cut adrift at any moment), he becomes destitute and a pauper. There is too much competition for this precious commodity among those who are a shade better off than himself, to render it likely that he can obtain a rood in another quarter. So he borrows the old rusty firelock, and has the wild Indian satisfaction of going out and laying low his enemy. Much, too, must be placed to the account of that Corsican spirit which somehow savours the blood of most Celtic nations; but until something is done to alter this serf-like relation to land, from one of pure life and death, to a natural commercial connexion, readily dissoluble without violence or fatal consequences, no very radical reform may be looked for.

Quite sixty-five years ago, in the present month, an outrage of this sort took place in the county of Clare, which was marked by some very painful yet very dramatic incidents. There was a certain Reverend Mr. Knipe, a clergyman of the Established Church, living in that part of the country, in a substantial house, known as Castle Richard. This gentleman had rendered himself obnoxious by various acts of lawful landlord sovereignty, which from time immemorial have been understood to be gross outrages and flagrant invasions of the tenants' rights and prerogatives. Latterly, intangible rumours had been abroad, low shapeless whispers of coming trouble—unreliable, and yet giving a certain sure warning. The Reverend Mr. Knipe did not wholly neglect them; but took some precautions as to less publicity in going abroad, and as to writing for police aid. Someway the times were very disturbed about this date; and possibly the Reverend Mr. Knipe did not half believe that any mischief was intended towards himself. Whatever was the reason, on the fatal Saturday night that followed, he had no additional protection.

On the fatal Saturday night, about the stroke of twelve, there was some curious doings in his immediate neighbourhood. In a retired place, by that hour, a force of no less than three hundred men had been silently collecting, all well armed with swords, blunderbusses, and pistols. They were all under the command of a person who enjoyed some lawless reputation, under the denomination of Captain Fearnought, but whose real name was Taite. This officer having mustered his force on a place called the Hill of Ballydrinna, then led them away silently, in the direction of Castle Richard, where the luckless clergyman was sleeping tran-

quilly, little thinking of what was to come. All these men had been sworn to a very strange oath "to God and the world, to certify the truth;" also, "to dethrone all kings, plant the tree of liberty in Ireland, and be a republic like America." And their leader had further inflamed their animosity with a stirring and appropriate speech, in which he reminded them of the rumours then abroad, that the Reverend Mr. Knipe was shortly to be placed at the head of one hundred thousand men, whom he would lead in person, to exterminate the innocent Irish peasantry. Captain Fearnought displayed some knowledge of tactics in his arrangement for the attack. The main body was drawn up so as to carefully surround the house, and a picket of twenty men was then told off to act as scouts, and to give the alarm by firing six shots. Finally, Captain Fearnought himself advanced to the door, with huge sledge-hammers and crowbars, and then taking with him thirteen of his men, entered the house, just as the clock struck one.

In a few moments Captain Fearnought and his men emerged from the house, dragging with them the body of Mr. Knipe, apparently dead; having flung it down on the ground in front of the hall-door, the others gathered round it in a dense ring. Then Captain Fearnought, raising his pistol, discharged it full into Mr. Knipe's head, and two ruffians being called up from the ranks, fired their blunderbusses full into the body: which, as described by a witness of the scene, seemed to rise in the air through the force of the discharge. Their bloody work being thus accomplished, Captain Fearnought and his men dispersed and went to their homes.

It is the inevitable destiny of all who are concerned in deeds of this description, and under the patronage of a sworn secret society, to be brought to justice through the agency of an accomplice. In this instance, one of the party, John Coghlan by name, came forward to offer himself as king's evidence; and on his testimony Captain Fearnought was indicted as plain John Taite, and very nearly escaped. The jury could not, or would not, agree; and, according to the profound and enlightened practice of the times, were "carted" to the border of the county, and there shot out ignominiously into another jurisdiction. But Nemesis came surely, though a little late. At the next assizes Captain Fearnought was satisfactorily convicted, and was hung in chains in the usual way. The approver was taken care of in the Ordnance Office at eleven shillings a week, besides being employed in occasional spy duty by the notorious Major Sirr: for which he received a further sum of half a guinea per week, besides an annuity from a grateful country of twenty pounds a year for his natural life. This was the story of the Reverend Mr. Knipe. The only surprising part of the transaction is, that in an age so eminently bloody, only one offering was made to Moloch, and that a handsome percentage of the three hundred, or at least a decimation, was not sacrificed.

The well-known George Robert Fitz-Gerald,

who bore the complimentary sobriquet of Fighting Fitz-Gerald, did not come by his death through one of the risks he had so often encountered without danger, but from a lawless attack of this description made in broad daylight. There was living at a place called Liberty Hall—a name that had been changed from Chancery Hall—a man called McDonnell, who had had the misfortune to offend the famous fire-eater; and the famous fire-eater, who now appears to have been anything but a desperate antagonist, but rather of a timid disposition, instead of choosing the doubtful issue of the customary cartel, preferred a surer and safer course. He collected a band of desperadoes, over a hundred in number, and led them to the assault of Liberty Hall, alias Chancery Hall. The victim got notice of these murderous designs, and, taking horse, fled; but, by various strategical movements on the part of "Colonel" Fitz-Gerald, he was eventually surrounded and taken prisoner. He was led away with others, treated with great barbarity, and placed under a strong guard, who had orders, on the slightest attempt at a rescue, to shoot him dead. This was so carefully impressed on the escort, that it is no wonder that when a few shots were heard in the rear the hint was at once taken, and the unfortunate prisoner killed on the spot. For this offence "Colonel" Fitz-Gerald (he bore this title by a sort of loose assumption, analogous to American brevet rank, and with an authority quite as sufficient) was tried, found guilty, and hanged in due course, to the great delight of all peaceably minded men. It was said, indeed, that so anxious were the community to be rid of this terrible plague, that the law was purposely strained a little, in order not to lose so advantageous an opportunity of getting rid of such a disturber of public peace and comfort.

What was known as the Holy Cross murder, which took place in 1827, scarcely thirty-five years ago, is full of dramatic horrors. The scene was in view of one of the most beautiful and best preserved of the old Irish ruins, which bore the picturesque name of Holy Cross Abbey; and the incidents have been very graphically given by the late Mr. Sheil, who was present at the trial. The centre figure is a Mr. Chadwick, a stern old rigorist landlord of the Cromwellian pattern, who gathered in his rents inflexibly, and where there was default put the law in force without an hour's delay. Low murmurings and suppressed mutterings gave sign of growing discontent, and he began to walk abroad amid ominous tokens of an accumulating hatred. He affected, however, a bitter contempt for those whom he oppressed, and to show how completely he despised even their power of doing him an injury exhibited himself very conspicuously among them. As he grew stout, he used to say to them contemptuously, "I am fattening on your curses." And they, with an artful disguise of their real feelings, which is one of the characteristics of the Irish peasant, would answer smoothly that his honour was mighty pleasant, and shure, God bless him, he was mighty fond of his joke! When,

however, it came to be known that a neat dwelling which was rising near the old Abbey was to be a police-barrack—specially constructed, perhaps, with a view to second severer measures—it was determined that something should be done, and that speedily. And a singularly handsome youth, named Grace, who had acquired a sort of notoriety in the country for many acts of daring, came forward, and voluntarily offered to take on himself the duty of ridding the country of the oppressor. There was no mystery of midnight about the transaction. Mr. Chadwick was walking on the high road, near this fatal police-barrack, in broad daylight, when this Grace stepped out of a hedge, and shot him dead. Country people, carts, horses, were passing and repassing; but no one saw, and no one heard. The wild code of the place was being carried out, and every one had too much reverence for its injunctions to hinder its precepts from being enforced. The assassin walked away unmolested, with his gun.

But there happened to be a just man in those parts, who was passing at the time, and who saw the foul deed, and who, after some hesitation—for it was a deed of peril to do—gave information to the authorities. And on his testimony the murderer was tried and convicted. He attracted sympathy by his youth, his handsome face and figure, and his undaunted bearing in the dock. But in the vast body of the peasantry who attended, there was noticed a gloom, and fiercely compressed lips, and an ominous silence and attention. And the prisoner was heard to declare that he was indifferent about his death, but that he should be avenged before the year was out.

By way of a striking effect, it was determined that the execution should take place at the scene of the murder. Large bodies of troops attended, and not less than fifteen thousand persons were present: not from any relish for such spectacles, for which the Irish have always shown a remarkable distaste, but as a sort of stern manifestation of sympathy. As a last keepsake, the prisoner took off his gloves and handed them to an old man near him, who swore not to take them off until vengeance was obtained. With that, the prisoner was swung into the air, and died without a struggle.

Now sets in the dramatic portion. The denouncer's life, it was known to the authorities and every one in lower station, was not worth a day's purchase. This was reasonably assumed as a matter of course; and he was smuggled away at once, out of the country. Thus public vengeance was balked; but it was known that he had left relations behind him—three brothers, who, besides being guilty of the crime of consanguinity, had actually worked at the hated police-barrack. There was an open league entered into, and it was well known, far and near, that these men were doomed. The task was entrusted to eight picked men, who waited their opportunity, and fired upon the three brothers as they were leaving work. But their ancient muskets, through rust or other imperfections, missed their aim, and the three con-

trived to escape. One, however, was hunted down into a widow's house, where his brains were beaten out.

It was determined to check this terrible spirit, and government offered the unusually large reward of two thousand pounds "for such information as would lead to the conviction of the offender." Will it be credited, that notwithstanding this tremendous bribe, and though the men were known, and were seen every day moving about at their accustomed tasks for more than three months, not one person could be got to come forward and claim the tempting prize? It was only when one of the ringleaders was himself arrested and convicted on another capital charge, that he offered, if his life were spared, to give the necessary information. Even when giving his testimony, he was anxious to have it exactly understood that it was only from a feeling of personal safety that he was induced to play this odious part. For three weeks the bloody assize lasted, marked with the strangest incidents. It was a ghastly Rembrandtish effect when at the close, at four o'clock of an Easter Sunday morning, an aged woman was carried in to identify one of the prisoners, and when, on her reasonably objecting that his being pointed out to her would naturally assist her memory, all the other prisoners not on trial were huddled from their beds in the condemned cells, and crowded into the dock, with dazed faces and blinking eyes, not knowing but that they were wanted for judgment and instant execution. That Easter Sunday morning was long remembered in the district. The "rewards" offered for the discovery of these offences furnish keys to the serious view taken of them by the government of the country. The sum of five thousand pounds has often been given on such occasions.

There was a frightful night attack, known as the "Burning of the Sheas," which left a terrible impression. These people had turned out one Gorman, and were forthwith denounced. At the dead of night, a band of desperadoes came, strongly armed, and surrounded the cottage, secured the door outside, and set it on fire. Horrible to relate, no fewer than seventeen human beings were consumed in that conflagration!

Justice was very prompt, and almost as savage as prompt, in those days. For a murder of an old gentleman near Cork, nine out of a band of fourteen concerned (which were all, indeed, that could be captured) were hung, and their skulls fixed upon spikes at the top of the jail. Until a very few years back, they were kept there, grinning horribly, to the disgust of the passers-by. But the effect was wholesome. Some such terrorism was necessary.

In the province of Munster, and stretching into Leinster, there is a region popularly known by the title of "The Golden Vein." It runs through, I think, four counties. It is a long belt of territory, remarkable for the pastoral beauty of the scenery, and the prolific richness of the soil. In fact, this is the region which won from Cromwell the enthusiastic exclamation

tion, as he looked down from the mountain-side upon its bounteous corn-fields and pastures: "Soldiers, this is a land worth fighting for!" Here might the stranger, who visited the land for the first time say: "Here, surely, might men live, prosperous, peaceful, contented, happy." Yet will I venture to say that, on this belt of land, more crimes of the species called agrarian, more bloody and daring deeds, have been done than in all Ireland besides. We frequently hear of what are called "the Tipperary murders"—a localisation of criminal repute which is, doubtless, due to the character which the Tipperary peasantry bear for reckless hardihood; but I believe that, if a careful examination of the criminal statistics were made, it would be found that the majority of these agrarian outrages during the last half century have been committed in the great pastoral county of Limerick. These outrages are purely "agrarian" and in no way "religious;" in fact, in that region, where the peasantry are nearly all of the same creed, the great majority of the victims of agrarian outrage have been Roman Catholics.

It is well known that the two persons recently murdered in Tipperary were both of the religion of the peasantry; and the mention of this fact calls to my memory a dreadful murder committed in the county of Limerick forty-one years ago, of which a Roman Catholic priest was the victim.

It was in the year 1821. The name of the priest was Mulqueen. At that time, secret combinations of the peasantry, bound by oaths, and bearing the most grotesque titles, were numerous in the country. They committed deeds of the most desperate daring, crimes of the most horrible ferocity, and none were safe from their vengeance. In one case, a wealthy yeoman, a tithe-proctor, but yet a Catholic (for the Protestant clergy were wont at that time to farm out their tithes to the highest bidder), was murdered on his own hearthstone; in another instance, an entire family were burned to death within the walls of their own home, while the yelling crowd surrounded the place to prevent the escape of any from the flames.

Father Mulqueen was riding homeward at midnight from a sick call. His reverence was an Irish priest of the old school—a race of men now quite extinct, of whose benevolence, piety, moderation, and tolerance, their Protestant contemporaries recorded their sincere admiration. The priest was riding home, easily jogging along upon his sleek mare, when at a turn of the road he encountered a gang of men, armed with various weapons, and wearing rude and grotesque disguises.

"God save you, boys!" was his salute.

"God save your reverence!" was the reply. They knew him well.

"Where are you all going at this hour?"

"Musha, to have a bit of sport."

"Ah, boys!" said the priest, solemnly, "I know where you are going."

"And might we be after asking your reverence where is that?"

"To the gallows-tree. I know the wicked

mission you're upon, and I tell you that there is not one of you following out this course of crime who will not meet a violent death. Be warned in time."

A surly answer followed, and a hint that his wisest and safest course would be to mind his own business and go home.

"No, boys," said the pastor, "this is my business—to warn you against crime, for the sake of your poor souls, and to denounce God's vengeance against the criminal. In the name of God, I implore of you to give up your wicked purposes to-night, and return to your own homes. Poor foolish creatures, you fancy you are disguised! Why, there is not one of you before me that isn't as well known to me as if the noon-day sun were shining this moment."

"Then!" (with an oath) exclaimed one ruffian, stepping forward, "your reverence knows too much to make it safe that you should live."

As he spoke, he deliberately raised his gun and shot the priest through the heart. The corpse of the murdered clergyman was found stretched upon the road next morning. It will be observed how little sectarian animosity had to do with this awful crime—how little that deep reverence for the priestly character, which signally characterises the Irish peasantry, availed to save this unfortunate gentleman from the consequences of his dangerous knowledge.

Let me recal one terrible example of the cruel vengeance which those peasant-assassins were sometimes known to execute. We know that in the county Limerick, the other day, Mr. Fitzgerald, a local landlord, a young man newly married, was, in the open day, and on the public highway, murdered in the arms of his young wife.

Well! In the year 1816 there lived in this same county, a certain Major Hoskins, agent to more than one absentee landlord. He was a stern and severe man, proud, harsh, and overbearing. With a peasantry like the Irish, kindness of speech goes almost as far as generosity of deed. Now, Hoskins had none of the outer characteristics which conciliate public favour. He was cold and repellant; he was haughty, imperious, and exacting; he never tried to conceal the contempt he felt for the peasantry among whom his lot was cast. There was many a spendthrift landlord of that day whose extravagance was bringing ruin on himself and his tenantry, and yet who, by genial kindness of manner, won, and retained to the last, the rough admiration and affection of the very peasants whom he was dragging along to a common ruin: you read of such things in the history of the period. Hoskins was, possibly, have been rigorously just: you meet those dark and stern men not seldom, who sacrifice everything to what they call their sense of justice. Hoskins made no friends and earned no love amongst that impulsive peasantry.

This gentleman had an only son, who seemed born to bring out the dark and stern shades of his father's temper more strongly, by absolute contrast of character. He was a bright joyous loving and lovable boy, and everybody's fa-

vourite. He mixed familiarly with the peasantry, strolled into their cottages, sat by their firesides, joined in their amusements, and was beloved by all, old and young. It was a singular contrast, this hatred of the father, this love for the child.

Hoskins had been very rigorous in the collection of rents for the absentee proprietors whose lands had been entrusted to his care, and he had evicted many defaulting tenants. At that time, if not now, eviction meant, for the Irish peasant, mendicancy and starvation; he had not then, even the workhouse to turn to. Threatening letters innumerable were sent to the stern agent, but he flung them into the fire with a laugh.

On a beautiful afternoon in summer, Major Hoskins was standing at the open window of his dining-room, with his wife and son. Some men, dressed in the ordinary garb of the peasantry, were seen coming up the gravelled carriage-way which led to the house. The boy, who had been in the habit of mixing so familiarly with the humbler population of the surrounding district, jumped out, and ran across the lawn to meet them. Imagine the horror and agony of either parent, when, as the boy hurried up to the approaching peasants, several guns were suddenly levelled at him, and their murderous contents discharged into his body! The father rushed down, and found his child lying dead on the lawn. Men wondered why, when the father was so abhorred, his life was not sought, in place of the life of the child who was so beloved. How could any of the peasantry have murdered that bright noble boy whom they had professed to love so much? It turned out afterwards that the murderers were strangers in the locality. They belonged to one of the secret organisations common at the time; and these men—doubtless chosen by lot—had come from a neighbouring county to execute vengeance for the alleged wrongs of those over whom Hoskins exercised so stern and rigorous a sway. They could have easily slain the father; they deemed it a more deadly punishment to murder before his eyes the child in whom all the love of his stern heart was centred.

BUTTONS.

WHAT is the inherent quality in buttons that they should be everywhere symbolic of conditions and degrees? What hidden mystery lies in those round plates of metal that all nations should agree to accept them as emblems of a man's real worth and standing, from the great Pajan-aram, dancing till the gunpowder runs out at the heels of his boots, to the little foot-page playing at pitch and toss with the baker's boy round the corner? Buttons rule the world; buttons are the timekeepers of the human omnibus, and set the stakes for which the great human family game and fight. Who has a soul above buttons? Who? A Cincinnatus, born as of rare chance, once in a thou-

sand years or so; little groups of pious martyrs giving up life and buttons both to the edge of the axe or the fire of the stake; a few unseen, unknown philosophers—mute Miltons and inglorious Hampdens—smoking their pipes in village alehouses, and content to let all the buttons in the universe go undesired and unattained; one or two lowly women—only one or two—serving love and duty too fully to have leisure left for ambition; just a sprinkling, sparse and wide, in all the broad field of human nature, where every one else is down upon his knees grubbing for buttons and button-shanks as eagerly as the old alchemists grubbed for the philosopher's stone. Yes, buttons rule the world, and, save the few exceptions mentioned, all men and women bow down to buttons and worship them, and greatly desire them.

Does anybody remember Prince Esterhazy,

All jewels, from jasey to his di'mund boots?

I am afraid to say now, though I knew the figures pretty accurately once, the worth of the diamond buttons of that royal prince—but they represented not only a weight of gold, but a weight of influence, a position of social leadership, a power of obtaining all such good things as he might desire, a modernised version of Aladdin's lamp, that placed him very high up in the scale of social demigods. Esterhazy's diamonds may be taken as the type of the power of wealth and position; buttons carried out to their ideal and perfected ultimate. Then there are the mandarin's glass buttons, as mighty in their way as the diamonds of the Austrian prince and as symbolic. How many heads have fallen at the nod of a stained glass button! how many tears have been shed at the dimming of its lustre, the flaws in its casting, or the scratches on its surface! How many men, Chinese men at least, have toiled and milled, and mopped and mowed, for the beatified translation from white to red, and from red to blue! while the yellow button—the imperial yellow—the yellow which makes a man brother to the sun, and uncle to the moon—who could be found to disregard that? The Chinaman whose soul could soar above the worship of a glass button coloured with chrome might be caught and exhibited as a natural curiosity—a Cincinnatus or a Garibaldi with oblique eyes and a slanting brow.

Our button worship at home is of a more moderate character; and yet, are the buttons on the first-lieutenant's coat no matters of reverence and kowtowing to sleek-chinned little Jack just struggling into his middy's shell? And what are the captain's to the lieutenant, and the admiral's to the captain, nay, even sleek-chinned little Jack's himself to the brave boys left at school and destined to duller trades? So with the army; the young cornet aspires after the buttons of the rank above him, but holds his own chin high over the sergeant and the corporal below; while through all the grades there is a universal straining after the buttons above, unequalled in any profession whatever. Perhaps

the result of the great attention paid to finery of all sorts, which is more characteristic of the army than of any other form of serving. Lower still, and meaner still, we come to button-worship in the glorified vanity of the greengrocer's son, whose highest ambition it is to die a butler, a gorgeous butler, redolent of port and master of some three per cents, and who takes his first step on that high ladder of future flunkey fame, in hiring himself out as your honour's Buttons—or your honour's honoured lady's page. Any how, he is Buttons; a greedy fat-faced shrewd-tongued boy, pimpled with shining knobs which to him are worth so many patents of nobility, every one of them. I doubt if he would care to exchange them, during the first week of his embryonic butler-ship, for my lord duke's strawberry leaves, or the baron's balls. He might exchange them for John's shoulder-knot and plush if you will; but for the most part he is thoroughly content with his degree, and envies no man his fuller honours. From the greedy little greengrocer's son, then, up to the Emperor of China sitting on his yellow throne between the backs of dragons, there is but one law regulating the human mass, and that is—Buttons.

Show me a man's buttons and I will tell you his life and character; and not only his, but his household's; and the life, character, and daily going of his wife and daughters—if he has any. And if he has not I can tell you this, too, and of what manner of womanhood is his laundress and room-keeper. First, there is the old-fashioned country gentleman, who will stick to his brass and blue, let the tailors say what they like. Cloth may come in, and cloth may go out, and the fashion may change as often as there are days in the year, but the fine old English gentleman cares nothing for that. Brass and blue, with a blue bird's-eye necktie and nan-keen-coloured vest were his favourite wear when he was a buck, and the world was, oh! ever so much brighter and gayer than it is now, and do you think he is going to make a popinjay of himself now, and change his ways because a few young fools do not know when they are well off? I can read that man's heart like an open book, all in the mirror of his brass and blue. The rare old claret and generous port down in those cobwebbed bins of his; the high Tory prejudices—Church and State, and the Queen, God bless her! and every—blanked—radical to the treadmill, and the poor man to his daily labour, and be thankful he has any daily labour to go to; and mechanics' institutes, and night schools, and popular lectures to the devil, where they originally came from; a healthy breeze on an autumn morning, with Reynard running low and the scent lying well; and England, the finest country, sir, on the face of the earth, and Sussex the finest county in it; and one Englishman can beat three—blanked—Frenchmen, with their soup-maigre and their frog fricassées; and the worst day that ever dawned on English homes was when Johnny Crapaud came over as a friend, and by Heaven,

sir, was not met at the point of the bayonet! This is what the fine old English gentleman is, when given up to brass and blue. Then there is the fashionable man, a little loud and flashy, whose buttons are always marked features in his attire, and who gets all the newest things that come out, whether they are deaths' heads or foxes', malachite or coral. This is the man who is independent of female aid in the matter of buttons; whose fronts are fastened with studs, and his sleeves with links; whose waistcoat-buttons are bolted from within, and who can go through the world with only a useful-handed "fellow," proudly indifferent to needles and thread, and all that these imply. This is the man of the clubs, and the omnibus-box at the opera; the man without a home, whose life passes in a round of dissipation, and who is independent of matrimony for pleasure or position; the man who has no thought of marrying, and about whom Belgravian mothers write their lamentations. But the real cause of the fall in the marriage market is the substitution of studs and bolted buttons for the mother-o'-pearl and thread kinds. Once on a time a wife was an absolute necessity with every gentleman for his buttons' sake, if for nothing else. Now he can do without them—he wears studs.

Then there is that other fashionable man, of a lower grade than the last—he who would be fashionable if he could, but who is only able to be a swell, and a third-rate imitator. He copies his more fortunate cousin in manner if not in quality, wearing bone, coloured pink or blue, against the other's coral and turquoise, and making paste and wash do the work of jewels and golden setting. I could run off a whole chapter of such a man's private life—of bad companions, late hours, fast amusements, and the Haymarket to finish with: of foolish pride, that must seem to be what it is not, with, perhaps, a poor mother on limited means somewhere down in the country, dreaming by night and praying by day for her darling son's innocence and advancement; or a young girl sitting watching for the return that does not come, pale with hope or faint with despair. I can see all this, with the end of manly reformation or of sunken sodden ruin, in the flashy buttons of that vulgar would-be's vest and front. Who does not know the sportsman by his buttons, full of dogs and deer and foxes? and of what countryman, for certain, is that sallow-looking individual who passes with a huge hooded cloak, braided and buttoned in such profusion? Would you, or would you not, incline to believe that young lady "fast" who wears a duffel coat, with big bone buttons about the size of a five-franc piece, and puts her hands in her pockets as she walks? and is not the strong-minded woman known by her buttons, which are not so much of the fast as of the masculine school? That strong-minded woman would scorn Laura Matilda's pretty little dainty trifles of aluminum and filigree gilt; she would have none of those charming blackberries or half-opened rosebuds which Lucy Angelina puts on as foils or emblems, as

the case may be; no! uncompromising bone, or severe cloth, a plainness that is puritanism, and simplicity that is hardness, mark the buttons of the strong-minded woman; and by her buttons you may judge her.

The strong-minded woman's husband, too, may be known by his buttons—not for their beauty, but for their imperfectness. They are never as they should be: they are never fast, never whole, never regular; they lie at all sorts of uncertain distances; and some of them—the mother-o'-pearl—broken across the middle; others—those aggravating linen things—worn at the edges, ragged, frayed, and disreputable. Half of them are wanting altogether, and the other half are not fit to be seen. And these are the signs by which you may know the husband of the strong-minded woman and of the slattern alike; as well as the reckless bachelor not set up in studs, and living on the mercy of his laundress. The poor neglected bachelor and his buttons! But the theme is getting out of date now, for the mechanically fastened buttons have beaten the older kinds out of the field, and, woe the day for the spinsterhood of England! have made men independent of women, and no longer constrained by the power of shirt-buttons. Yet, there are still some few remaining—some of the more tenacious and conservative sort—who cling to the mother-o'-pearl and the art of sewing, and who thus bear about on their persons, strongly marked, the sign and seal of their position with respect to women. These are the men who are sure to marry on the first opportunity. Studs and patent bolts are shy, but linen and mother-o'-pearl safe. Yes, safe! even if there is a sister in the house; for a sister's button-sewing and a wife's are very different things. The first sews on her gross from honour, womanly pride, and the dignity of her sex; the other from duty, sweetened sometimes with love. It is all the difference between a machine and a human being; so at least said once to me a man who had both, and who therefore ought to know.

There are many odd circumstances connected with buttons, and perhaps no single article of commerce has been made more account of by the legislature. The button world has been ruled and regulated like a pampered child, and acts and bills by the dozen have been passed, ordering what kinds of buttons should be worn, and what kinds discarded, and on what false principles Birmingham buttons should be protected, and every other kind of button manufacture prohibited. In the reigns of Charles the Second, and William and Mary, foreign buttons were not to be imported under a penalty of one hundred pounds by the importer, and fifty pounds by the seller; William the Third fulminated against wooden buttons, also against buttons of cloth or stuff; Anne demanded that "no tailor, or other person, shall make, sell, set on, use, or bind, on any clothes any button or button-holes of cloth, &c., on pain of five pounds a dozen;" and George the First followed in the same track. Indeed, the thing got to be such a nuisance, that

the Gentleman's Magazine took it up, and in the pretended minutes of the proceedings in the Senate of Lilliput, tried what ridicule would do, since common sense had failed. It was in seventeen hundred and twenty-one that the most stringent laws against cloth buttons were passed, for the encouragement of the metal trade, and these were carried to such a height that a tailor could not obtain payment of a coat which he had made with cloth buttons. The question was tried, and the tailor cast as a misdemeanant and law-breaker. In fact, all clothes with cloth buttons on them, exposed for sale, might be seized and forfeited; and even a private person, if he wore cloth buttons or bound button-holes, might be informed against and fined forty shillings a dozen: half of the money to go to the informer. So the metal button manufacturer lifted his head high as one of the privileged and protected of the land; while his poor little cloth rival was obliged to smuggle himself into political existence before he could be received and recognised. Those metal buttons had a certain currency value, too, for during the long war the shanks used to be cut off and the moulds passed as halfpence, to the confusion of a man's finances and the detriment of his wardrobe.

It would be difficult now-a-days to make any such use of the modern button, for there is scarcely a single article of manufacture which does not yield buttons among its list of articles. There are glass buttons, and porcelain buttons, linen buttons, thread and bone; there are mother-o'-pearl, bronze, steel, cast-iron, brass, wood, mock jewel and real, coral, coal, marble, and gutta-percha; there are silk, and cloth, and velvet, and lace; there are aluminum, and zinc, silver, gold, copper, and tin. There is scarcely a subject to be named, putting out the fatty materials, which cannot be transmuted into buttons, and after which the public does not run with frantic eagerness. This has always been true of the button trade; and this is how a clever man once put it: "This beautiful ornament appears with infinite variation; and though the original date is rather uncertain, yet we well remember the long coats of our grandfathers, covered with half a gross of high-tops, and the cloaks of our grandmothers, ornamented with a horn button, nearly the size of a crown-piece, a watch, or a john-apple, as having passed through the Birmingham press. Though the common round button keeps on with the steady pace of the day, yet we sometimes see the oval, the square, and the pea, the concave and the pyramid, start into existence. In some branches of traffic the wearer calls loudly for new fashions; but in this the fashions tread upon each other, and crowd upon the wearer." What would any one say now, if suddenly awakened from the contemplation of high-tops, and buttons like john-apples as the last perfection possible to the fashion, and transported before that shop-window in Regent-street, where every kind, form, colour, and size, appeal to some one's taste, and tempt some one's open purse? Flies,

and frogs, and flowers, little enamelled swallows, and butterflies as gaudy as nature, are sure to find purchasers among the lovers of quaintness and gatherers of bric-à-brac; so are tiny ends of cable, imitation screws with the broad cleft in the middle for the screw-driver, Algerian sequins, and Roman mosaics (imitated), huge bosses of all colours, and black glass cut into facets, or moulded into raspberries and blackberries, purple with ripeness; these pearls will not hang long on hand, though they are nothing better than wax filming a thin glass shell; nor those translucent agates, banded and starred; those ornamented gold moulds will suit well with Maria's velvet, and those deep green jaspers, with the blood-drops on each, will look unsavourable on Henry's vest; Matilda chooses the opaline white; Laura the heavenly blue; simpler Jane takes those silken acorns, with a net-work cup; and that handsome young Israelite unhesitatingly adopts yonder set of purple enamel, starred with gold, which she thinks will look divine down her royal robe of blue. The only thing wanting is the money. Taste and the wealth of choice are here in full profusion.

What else is there about buttons? There are the buttons upon foils, which encourage skill and prevent bloodshed; very useful things those buttons upon foils, those railway buffers of life, that stand between two opposing forces and prevent unwholesome contact. I do not know how the world would go on if there were no buttons on the foils with which we constantly play. What terrible mangling of the human face! What long and earnest strife in the room of mere playful harmless fencing! Yes, we cannot part with the buttons on our foils, whatever else we lose. Then there are buttony mushrooms—do you know the flavour of buttony mushrooms fried in butter and duly peppered? mushrooms that you have gathered yourself out on the high sea downs, before the dirty little boys have had time to tramp across the close-cropped dewy grass, or the sheep have shaken off the last night's sea mist from their fleeces? Ah! those buttony mushrooms are worth something to the gatherer, and represent no little care and sorrow lost out on the downs, or drowned for the day beneath the waves. Then there are the bachelor's buttons of our cottage gardens, a pretty little flower with a fine flavour of rusticity about it, very eloquent of the country parsonage, and the trim gardens before the cottage doors; a pretty little miniature dahlia, gold-coloured and untidy, always shedding its leaves and making a litter at its green feet. And there is the man who is button-holed, or held, poor wretch! and must listen to half an hour's harangue about nothing interesting, while his friends are waiting dinner, or his wife is sitting in her diamonds and opera cloak, sullenly expecting his escort. The man who button-holes another is a ruffian, not fit for civilised society, and ought to go out to the long-winded savages who have not yet learnt that brevity is the soul of wit. There is the close-fisted curmudgeon who buttons up his pockets,

and the open-handed lord who wears none at all on his; there are buttons on window-sashes, and buttons on drawer handles, buttons on Spanish bull-fighters, and those immortal "buttons upon blankets" which the old Scotch husband "saw never nane." And oh! there are many buttons which sadly need button-holes! Poor lone things standing unhooked and all apart, desolate and unappropriated; buttons—boutons or buds—living unfastened and ungathered, holding together no garment over a living heart, and doing no service in the world of men. Poor unfastened buttons!

THE GREAT SHOE QUESTION.

THE Great Shoe Question is being agitated in India. The Great Shoe Question has been agitated in India before. Whenever it is agitated, the agitation is a cheering sign. There are certain luxuries in politics which are never resorted to but when the necessities have ceased to cause anxiety. The Great Shoe Question is one of these. It was never heard of during the mutinies, when famine was pressing upon the people, or when the financial ends of the country were so shaped that they could not be made to meet. Even during the Nil Darpan discussion nobody troubled himself about the Great Shoe Question. But happier days have come upon us. Authority is restored; the people are fed; "equilibrium" is no name for the prosperous state of the balance-sheet; the Nil Darpan delusion has exploded. India has no longer need to trouble itself about important questions. Our countrymen can dress, drive, and dine, in peace, with nothing in particular to do but to multiply the number of beer-bottles, which satirists assure us are to be the only enduring monuments of their rule. The Golden Age is restored, and has nothing to trouble itself about but the rate of exchange. At such a time as this, active minds find that they can't stand it any longer. They cast about for a grievance, and happy is the community which finds nothing more distressing than the Great Shoe Question. It is to Indian politicians what the ruffled rose-leaf was to the Sybarite. It is a capital excuse, in short, for getting up a disturbance. They are an easy indolent community, the Anglo-Indians, spoiled children of fortune; but before we begin to moralise let us look at home. Are there no political Sybarites in this country—no ruffled rose-leaves of which we hear the discomforts daily discussed? Never mind. Our present business is with the Anglo-Indians. If we have any weaknesses of our own we may safely leave them to make the discovery.

In the mean time the reader may perhaps desire to know something more concerning the Great Shoe Question than is contained in the above flippant remarks.

The Great Shoe Question had its origin at a comparatively recent period, and arose out of the conflict of European with Asiatic manners, produced by the closer intercourse of the two races.

The circumstances which led to the agitation may be briefly told.

In Europe we doff our hats upon entering a house; in Asia they doff their slippers. The arrangement in both cases is dictated by practical good sense. In Europe we wear a covering for the head which is light and easily removable, and which, in civil life at any rate, is so ugly that no sane man desires to wear it any longer than he is obliged. The latter may not be the original reason why we cast it as an expression of courtesy, but the reason might pass in the present day. It is most certainly of all articles of costume the most easily dispensed with. To take off one's coat, for instance, to a lady in the park, as an illustration to a bow, would be inconvenient; and to remove that garment upon entering a house would scarcely have a graceful effect, if it involved an appearance in the drawing-room in one's shirt-sleeves. As for taking off one's boots, considering that the process can seldom be effected without the aid of machinery, and even then is apt to involve an undignified struggle, I should like to see the man who would submit to such an infliction whenever he dined out, or made a morning call; to say nothing of the unpleasantness of walking about the house in his corns, and the battle to get the boots on again when he took his leave! The Asiatic is subjected to conditions precisely the reverse. Tell him to take off his turban, and if he be a man of any caste or consideration, he will feel simply insulted. The indignity of appearing anywhere but in his bath with a bare head would be revolting to his feelings. Moreover, he very frequently wears a turban comprised of from twenty to sixty yards of muslin, upon the folding of which he, or his servant, bestows more attention than Beau Brummel ever bestowed on his cravats. Fashion, as well as dignity, forbids its removal. His feet, on the other hand (if such an apparent confusion of terms be permissible), afford an admirable opportunity for the display of any amount of politeness. As his coat is all dressing gown, so his boots are all slippers. He walks but little, and when he is not walking his great comfort is to kick his boots off. Comfort and courtesy combined—could there be a happier combination? Thus it is that there is as good reason why the Asiatic should take off his slippers as that the European should take off his hat, upon entering a house.

The two customs, while dictated equally by practical convenience, have the additional advantage that they do not necessarily conflict. There is no reason whatever why an European gentleman should not hang up his hat in the hall because an Asiatic gentleman has left his slippers on the door-mat. One would fancy that West and East could not meet in greater harmony. But unfortunately the harmony has not always been unbroken. Other things being equal, all would be well; but other things never are equal, and circumstances have from time to time arisen which have caused not a little confusion in the international etiquette.

The Great Shoe Question arose through the

rapid development of Young Bengal, of late years, in European education and ideas. The Bengalees, our readers scarcely need be told, are a very different race from the natives of the north of India. They are not fighting animals. They are an easy oily people, who never undergo physical exertion when they can avoid it; they get fat when they feed well, with the certainty of a pig or a goose; and they always feed in proportion to their income, so a rise in salary among them is almost immediately marked by an increase in size. Leanness, indeed, is a proclamation of poverty, and a Bengalee seldom sees his toes after he has made his fortune. But, contrary to the ordinary rule among Europeans, inactivity of body does not beget inactivity of mind. The Bengalees are wonderfully quick to learn and acute to comprehend; industrious to execute and facile to adapt. In cunning and craft they are more than a match for any European, and did not the latter throw honesty into the scale, he would have no chance against his Bengalee brother. As it is, "the best policy" gains the day in Asia as in Europe. The Bengalee considers that the European takes a mean advantage of him in this respect, because the weapon is one to which he is unaccustomed; but our countrymen, it is pleasant to think, are content to remain under the imputation, and have not yet consented to fight the Bengalees with the weapons of their choice. The ingenuity of these people has long since been distinguished in arts and manufactures. In their imitation of the productions of European industry, they almost equal the Chinese. Given an article to copy, and they will produce its exact counterpart, from a carriage to a coat. It is true that if they are not looked after, the carriage will be found weak as to the wheels, uncertain as to the springs, warped as to the panels, and that in a short time it will neither run nor hang, nor do anything (if it has been much in the sun) except tumble to pieces. It is true also that the coat, unless carefully superintended, will be reproduced with any patches or other disfigurements which may have belonged to the original model, and that the coat will come into as many pieces as Mr. Buckstone's in a farce. But these defects on the part of the workmen are moral; they do not imply want of skill. On the contrary, considering that he could make an effective article if he would, the deception must be considered a decided test of talent. These are instances of the many ways in which the Bengalee, if he condescended to be honest, could beat the European hollow. There is one business, by the way, in which trickery cannot be introduced, except at the almost certain risk of punishment—this is, book-keeping. The Bengalee has an instinctive turn for figures, and the class who cultivate it make the best accountants in the world. Being cut off in a great measure from producing a spurious article, they give us the result of their patience, order, and exactitude, in an unadulterated form. Thus it is that while, for most departments of manufacture, nobody will employ native workmen who can

command European, most persons engage native accountants as a matter of choice.

The same facility possessed by the working classes in the imitation of European articles of manufacture, is marked in their educated countrymen by the reproduction of European manners and ideas. The result is about equally superficial in either case; but it is certain that the new generation of Bengalees—Young Bengal, as they are collectively called—display immense facility in the acquirement of both our language and our literature. Their knowledge is acquired mainly through their talent for imitation; but it is sufficient to make a very fair show either in conversation or writing. Its depth may be estimated from the fact that they learn the peculiarities of the language, almost before they learn the language itself. Young Bengal may blunder woefully in grammar, but he will make use of the current phrases of the day as if he had just stepped out of a London club. If a member of parliament or a journalist employs a phrase which catches the public, Young Bengal will have it at his fingers' ends before it has half gone the rounds of the press. Thus he would tell you gravely during the Crimean war that it was absolutely necessary that we should have "the right man in the right place;" also that a "dismounted dragoon is about as effective as a swan on a turnpike-road." An anticipated event he would describe as "looming in the future;" and in a very short time, I would lay a moderate wager, he will be informing his European friends that the "bloated armaments" which we maintain are more than the public purse can bear. His handwriting is another illustration of the imitative nature of his talent. He may be guilty of a hundred faults of orthography in a single letter, but that letter will have nothing of the schoolboy about it as far as appearance is concerned. The handwriting will display a determined character, such as he has observed in the calligraphy of official men, and it is always sure to be what people call "gentlemanlike" in its style. Some Bengalees are of course more proficient than others, both in conversation and in writing, but even the most ignorant student of English will be tolerably certain to have our mannerisms thoroughly at his command.

Young Bengal, besides writing letters, occasionally prints them. Nay, more. Besides letters, he prints articles—literary articles, political articles, articles upon every conceivable subject, from some question of Hindoo theology, to Lord Palmerston's last speech in the House, or the Emperor Napoleon's last move in Europe. Some of his productions are crude, others almost incomprehensible, but they never fail to exhibit a certain "knack" of falling in with English forms and conventionalities of expression, which indicate close if not acute observation. If the editors of the local journals chose, they could fill their columns with "leading articles" contributed by Young Bengal. These are generally written with due regard for journalistic observances, but occasionally the writer betrays

himself as the lady did who undertook to edit a newspaper, in opposition to another lady who conducted a rival publication. The pair attacked one another for some time in a strictly parliamentary manner, contenting themselves with such modes of expression as, "we differ from our contemporary," "the writer is misinformed," &c. &c. Until at last one of the fair editors, stung by some severe sarcasm, put forth a rejoinder, in which she said, "This conceited puss should be aware that," &c. &c. The mystery hitherto observed was of course at an end; she proclaimed her own sex and that of her rival. In the same manner Young Bengal occasionally forgets himself, and comes out with some gross or grotesque image which marks the Asiatic origin of the composition; but for the most part he manages the disguise wonderfully well, and is not much more misty in his style than the British writer sometimes is himself.

Young Bengal, not content with talking and writing English, and reading Shakspeare and Milton in the original, has of late years taken to eat beef and drink champagne and brandy-panee, besides smoking Manilla cheroots. All these proceedings are strictly contrary to his religion, but he is not particular, and is fast becoming too philosophical to have any religion. For be it observed that although a bad Hindoo he never shows any sign of becoming a good Christian, or even a bad one—and the policy of our rule does not permit the smallest suggestion towards that object on the part of his European teachers. This is a delicate subject, however, and has nothing to do with the matter in hand. What I was coming to was this—that Young Bengal, from talking, reading, and writing English, has advanced so far as to eat beef, drink champagne and brandy-panee, and smoke Manilla cheroots, and further, that he has of late years made an additional stride towards Europe by wearing Wellington boots. It is thus that he has become connected with the "Great Shoe Question."

It is very likely that in his enthusiasm Young Bengal would have adopted European costume entirely, but for the inconvenience of the arrangement. One can scarcely fancy a native of India, who has been used to the perpetual déshabillé of Oriental costume, being fool enough to make a finished toilette. Young Bengal, if he tried the experiment, must have found it a failure; for it is certain that he has addicted himself to no article of European attire but the boots. In these same boots he used to go stamping about in public places, in a state of great pride; but when he presented himself thus equipped at Government House a difficulty arose. So very ordinary a piece of courtesy as the removal of the slippers in the verandah, had never been omitted, and the attendants saw no reason why the boots of Young Bengal should lead to a breach of etiquette. But how to get them off, was the difficulty. There were no boot-jacks at hand, and if there had been, it was felt that to produce them would have rather a ridiculous effect. So, as Young

Bengal's boots could not be got off, he was allowed to keep them on, and the British power consented to pocket the affront. But the real difficulty was to come. Native gentlemen, seeing that the wearers of boots were privileged, saw no reason why the wearers of slippers should not be privileged also. They accordingly struck, and refused to go barefoot into the presence. The natural alternative was put to them—if they did not choose to uncover their feet, like Asiatics, they might have the option of uncovering their heads, like Europeans. But the latter idea was not to be thought of. The indignity was such as no native gentleman could survive. Considering that the shedding of the slippers is not an act of submission or of deference amounting to an admission of inferiority, but a mere form of courtesy founded upon convenience, meaning neither more nor less than the doffing of the hat in England, which a nobleman will do in a gamekeeper's cottage—it was a little too much to expect that the governor-general would submit to this settlement of the question.

In the East, where the luxuries of life rank among the necessities, social trifles become matters of serious political import. Lord Dalhousie well knew that any dignity which he neglected to maintain, would dwindle away, and leave him in the well-known position of majesty stripped of its externals. This was more than the British power could bear, with any number of bayonets. All the king's horses and all the king's men could never set up the proconsulate Humpty Dumpty, when it had once dropped from its dignity. The representative of Britain saw that the time had come to act. The course of action to be adopted was the next question. He had the giant's strength; he might use it like a giant; but was such a policy desirable? The representative of Britain thought not. He had the hand of steel; he drew on the velvet glove. He had the fortiter in re; he adopted the suaviter in modo. He issued an order that natives who dressed like natives, and wore slippers, should leave the latter on the threshold, according to native custom, on pain of not being admitted to his presence; but that natives who conformed, to a partial extent, to the fashion of European costume, might retain their boots if they chose to do so. If they wore hats they must doff them; but the turban, or pugree, not being meant for removal, it might in any case be retained. I believe that the article relating to the boots contained a stipulation to the effect that they could be retained only when surmounted by European pantaloons, strapped down; by which provision the privilege was placed in its true light—as a concession to convenience rather than an extraordinary favour. However this may have been, all parties appeared to be satisfied with the arrangement. The wearers of slippers re-

signed those articles as heretofore at the threshold; and the wearers of boots, finding that they gained no particular dignity or importance by parading them at Government House, ceased to do so to a considerable extent. The Wellington of Europe may still be heard to creak occasionally on native feet in the vice-regal presence; but young Bengal, for the most part, meets the representative of the sovereign upon the old footing—that is to say, shoeless.

The question thus happily set at rest, was revived the other day at Bombay, in consequence of an order which may be considered just a little injudicious. It appears that the income-tax commissioners of that presidency took umbrage at the want of respect shown by many of the natives who appeared before them to make their returns. The said natives actually came into the presence of the high and mighty, with covered feet! The official dignity was roused, and an order issued rendering the doffing of the slippers compulsory. The result was, very determined resistance on the part of the natives, and very considerable confusion on the part of the commissioners—for they had imposed a rule which they evidently had no power to enforce. The income-tax commissioners represent neither majesty nor law; they are simply executive officials sitting in an office. If they have any complaint to wage against the persons who appear there on business, they can simply return the names of the offenders, who must be dealt with by other authority. They have no more right to make a complaint against a native of Bombay for not removing his slippers in their presence, than the officials at Somerset House have a right to make a complaint against a native of London for not removing his hat. The omission in either case is a piece of bad taste and bad manners, but it is nothing more. It is not analogous to the case of a man, either in Bombay or in London, who might refuse to doff his slippers or his hat in a court of law. How the dispute has been adjusted, or whether it has been adjusted at all, does not appear; but it is scarcely too much to suppose that an amount of respect which satisfies the governor-general in Calcutta should satisfy the income-tax commissioners in Bombay. That these gentlemen are not quite so easy to please, seems evident from the fact that they demand the attention in question at the hands—or rather at the feet—of the Parsees, who generally wear English shoes. The Parsees are the most loyal and respectable class in the presidency, and any resistance on their part to the demand is not likely to be dictated by bad feeling. To them, therefore, every consideration is due. With regard to other classes there is quite sufficient ground for forbearance, in the fact that the income-tax is already the most unpopular measure of finance ever imposed upon India.

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